

# THE QUEST ETERNAL

BY

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'Kālohyam niravadhīrvipulā cha Prithyī'—*Bhavabhūti*

Every daring experiment in art, if it breaks virgin ground, is a challenge thrown by the artist to his age. The same crucible in which his art is tested also tests the current canons of criticism'

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## PREFACE

THE QUEST ETERNAL comprises three separate quests, the 'Ancient', the 'Medieval', and the 'Modern', and seeks to transcribe basic philosophical ideals in forms of pure poetry.

The author is aware that the expression of the philosophical temperament, and still more, of philosophical ideas of life and the world, in forms of pure poetry, is somewhat of an experiment in poetic art; but he is convinced that if pure poetry is to be progressive, with the drama and other sister arts, in the treatment of the complex inner life of our age, the experiment must one day be brought to a successful issue.

The ideas here sought to be 'coined' into life and personality, if not into flesh and blood, are what the author would term immanent ideas, the stuff of our life, the warp and the woof of our world-consciousness, iridescent instinct flashing into reflection.

Not lyrical intensity or *furor*, but the poise and balance of reason and imagination, of historical reality and universal ideality is the complex effect which has been aimed at, in this symphony of the ages.

Pure art is sincere and disinterested no less than the 'Will to Good', but in appraising either (or in laying down the norm) it would be 'pathological' to appeal to



any emotion other than the emotion of contemplating the beautiful or the good. No doubt, all emotions are proper plastic stuff for constructions in æsthetics as well as ethics; but as building material, experience in all its forms is intrinsically valuable — ideation, imagination, instinct, no less than emotion. But none of these enter into the norm.

What *does* enter into the norm and test of poetry is not emotional 'exaltation', imaginative 'transfiguration', or disinterested 'criticism', but, in and through them all, the creation of a personality with an individual scheme of life, an individual outlook on the universe. From this point of view, the second piece in this volume, the Medieval Ballad, attempts to portray, in brief outline, a central figure, the Wizard Knight, who embodies a whole submerged culture and *zeitgeist*; and the last piece, *A Vision of Psyche, or the Quest of Life*, is a modern epic of the soul in the struggle against the world-order; and the history of ideas or the successive unfolding of the world's phases, as presented therein, is of interest only as centred round the personality of the hero as a representative of modern Humanity. But the poem rises above the merely modern in its mythopœic content. For the two most outstanding creations of the Greek mythopœia, Psyche the Soul's Vision of deathless Love, and Prometheus the Deliverer, are (by means of an Interlude) interwoven in this story of the modern Quest of Life, while the antagonistic forces are symbolized in the other recurrent motif, the savage ritual of the omophagic sacrifice. By finding the cosmic meaning for the primitive

and the pagan, indeed for their most characteristic elements, the modern ideal in this series seeks to attain universality.

An experiment in poetic content is inevitably also one in poetic form. But the novelty in this case consists merely in escaping from the conventionally unconventional, which seems to be the accepted hall-mark of modernism in verse, and reverting in large part to the classical in manner and diction, which transcends all fashions conventional or unconventional, old or new. An austere economy even to baldness has been the author's constant model in expression as the only proper vehicle for this new poesy. Indeed, to avoid that amorphous and essentially unpoetic indefiniteness of outline which is the bane of subjective poetry, the author has uniformly applied an objective treatment to the experiences of the ideal world. Moreover, an occasional repetition of characteristic lines and phrases has been employed as a device to give fixity of pattern.

Now a word as to the *mise en scène*.

The author has been anxious to avoid mistaking mere side views, occidental or oriental, for the cosmorama. Accordingly, in depicting the ideal of any age, he has selected for imaginative treatment that particular form, among its many representative cultures, which served as the meeting-ground and fusion-point of different races and civilizations, Eastern and Western. In the first piece, the Ancient Hymn, the imagined background is half Greek, half Oriental, such as the *milieu* in which Gnosticism and Neo-Platonism grew up; and the hymn



is supposed to be uttered by a Greek priest returned from Bactria to his island home, after many years' sojourn, say at Taxila or Mathura, where he had familiarized himself with Indian speculation, Indian mythology and Indian art—a supposition which is by no means extravagant, and which, judging from the presumably Indian elements in the Gnostic and Neo-Platonic cosmogonies and the then nascent Church architecture, has no slight historic verisimilitude. Similarly, in *The Medieval Ideal*, the Rime of the Wizard Knight, the author has chosen for the central figure a knight-errant, who is represented to have been a disciple, not of the Catholic hierarchy, but of the Platonic, Syrian, and Magian Mystical Brotherhoods. Indeed, the great rationalistic movement from the Mutazilas of the eighth and ninth centuries to the Sincere Brethren (Ikhwanus-Safa) and other Seekers of Truth such as the encyclopædists of the tenth and eleventh centuries, together with the revival of Syrian Neo-Platonism and probably the old Magian Wisdom, made for a type of medieval culture in the Eurasian borderlands which was as distinctly opposed to the medieval Catholic type as Gnosticism and Mithraism had, a thousand years before, been opposed to primitive Christianity; and the author has attempted to restore this lost world and portray it allusively round the central figure of the Wizard Knight from such scattered hints and remnants as are now available.

In *The Modern Ideal*, no such composite setting was necessary. Here Humanity has been sought in its simple universality, without that manifold generality which is

secured in the first two ideals through an eclectic or ethnic compositeness of culture. But even here (in the Finale) the outstanding fact of our age, the contact and conflict between so-called civilized and primitive life enters into the story that forms the background.

These verses in depicting the ideal of any particular age adopt the method of visualization, freely using long trains and processional robes of concrete visual embodiments; but what is aimed at is not historicity, but the imaginative apprehension of the soul of an age, its humanism, its universe-idea and its God-consciousness, *viewed from the standpoint of the living problems of today.*

Moreover, the fusion of cultures, the Greco-Indian in the Ancient Hymn, and the Syro-European in the Medieval Rime, though they were vital formative forces in those ages, had no direct political expression and do not therefore come up to the surface of history; but for that reason they are not unhistorical, nor are they unsuited to imaginative treatment in a panoramic presentation of the Quest of Ages. In fact, only these blended Eastern-Western cultures can adequately represent the Ancient and Medieval ideals at their *passing*, and significantly explain the *transition* to the next succeeding age.

The author has in each case chosen a transitional epoch, as such an epoch not only marks the culminating point of the ideal that is passing away, but also reveals the inner necessity of life which ushers in the coming ideal.

The parallelisms in the three ideals are pointed out in the margin by means of cross references and also in a supplementary note, which will help in an understand-



x  
PREFACE.

ing of the harmonies as well as the discords in this symphony of the ages.

Wordsworth's synthetic imagination sought to harmonize the spirit of man with the spirit of nature; it is left to *this age of cosmic humanism* to apply the 'Synthetic Vision' to the pageant of universal history. These verses merely point the way.

## CONTENTS

|  | PAGE |
|--|------|
| PREFACE ... ..                           | v    |
| THE PASSING OF THE ANCIENT IDEAL ... ..  | 1    |
| THE PASSING OF THE MEDIEVAL IDEAL ... .. | 21   |
| THE MODERN IDEAL ... ..                  | 39   |
| APPENDIX ... ..                          | 87   |

*The first two poems were complete in their present form in 1893*



THE PASSING OF THE ANCIENT IDEAL

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AN ANCIENT HYMN

I

THE PASSING OF THE ANCIENT IDEAL

(Greek Naturalism transfigured in the light of  
Oriental Mysticism)

AN ANCIENT HYMN

Scene: *An Ocean-isle*

THE ARGUMENT

I

1. The birth of the Godhead—the Godhead as the cosmic process
2. The cosmic flux—the stellar and the sub-human elements of prehistoric tradition—man's primitive self-projection as of a child—this innate tendency possibly a just, though crude, intimation of the divine truth
3. The shadow of the coming Human

II

1. New forms of the Godhead—Intelligential Essences and Fair Humanities
2. The Maid Eternal
3. The Child Eternal



## AN ANCIENT HYMN

*Scene: An Ocean-isle*

1

O World-drift cyclical!

*Coelus!* Heaven!

Where wast Thou

In the primal Deep?

When all lay one, a universal grey,

And slept Its sleeplessness away

In dreamless sleep!

Dreams yet were not; nor shadows chased themselves,

As on that sea

On which the sun is setting evermore!

Shoreless was that Ocean,

10

Not a stir, no motion;

But hark! the distant tide, the far-off Ages' roar!

Flux which is not, yet doth seem,

Rolling, rolling, mystic Dream;

Hark! the waves, they come, they come,

With a noisier, noisier hum,

Till the mighty waters

Birth of the  
Godhead. Con-  
trast *Medieval*  
*Ideal*, ll. 83-9;  
*Modern Ideal*,  
ll. 182-90,  
(Birth of Psyche)

Seethe and boil and roar!  
And from the multitudinous  
Wild up roarious roll of Æons, 20  
Leap, and peal, and surge, and flash  
A light, a tone, a rhythmic motion,  
Whose unison is all Thy life, in tidal waves' progression!

Thy cosmic waves' progression!  
Thy apparitions who shall tell  
In countless worlds, Time's tides that rose and fell!  
The music of the spheres but echoes  
Unremembered lays;  
The constellated stars are emblems  
Of Thy elder Days! 30  
Ashtoreth,  
The Huntress Fair. . . .  
The Virgin's scales  
Astride the air. . . .  
Thus child-like Man  
Reads all he can  
Thy storied symbols Ancient Heavens did trace!  
Nor impious fancies these;  
Thee nothing human doth displease,  
For Thou hast not disdained to wear the human face! 40  
Thy Muses, Graces, Charities,  
Are human mysteries;  
Thou tastest of the cup from which Thou freely serv'st  
man's race!

## 3

And not alone Thy Heaven has painted  
 Silhouettes of man in Space;  
 In Faun and Dryad,  
 Nymph and Naiad,  
 Ancient Earth was shadowed, haunted,  
 By the coming Race.  
 Man's light was on the sea!  
 The Nereids' play  
 Was hushed the day  
 That Beauty's soul was risen first from Ocean's mystery!  
 The Nether world was lit;  
 In desert Space did sit  
 A sweet undying pathos,  
 Man's coming Destiny!

50

## II

## 11

On rolls Thy tidal wave in cosmic play!  
 On its crest,  
 New forms confest;  
 Intelligent Essences and Fair Humanities,  
 Whose Glory touched the poet's dream in epos, chant  
 and lay.

60



## 2

*Cf. Modern Ideal,* Art Thou the Maid Eternal?

ll. 947-60

(Urania-Psyche);

*Medieval Ideal,*

ll. 282-7

(*Natura*, Myriad  
Nature)

Thou, Urania fallen a-dreaming

On the Milk-white Way?

Light of her half-formed smile a-gleaming,

Glory of her tresses streaming,

Far on Oceanic Space's world-waves, starry spray!

Thy risings and thy settings, who hath known?

In Heaven, on Earth, the eternal flight,

The Vision and the Chase in sight,

Renewed by night and day!

Thy storied apparitions who shall tell, O Maid!

Asura-vimōhinī,<sup>1</sup>

Umā, Ushā, Urvashī,<sup>2</sup>

Ashtoreth, Proserpina,

Aphrodite, Helena,

Reflections of Thy smile have fired

Heaven's hosts, Earth's hearts of clay!

70

Art Thou the Golden Eros,

Apparition in the Chaos,

Harbinger of Peace?

Art Thou the Child Eternal?<sup>3</sup>

80

<sup>1</sup> An apparition of Beauty, literally, 'she who deludes the Asuras'. In the contest between the Suras (gods) and Asuras (demons), the apparition deceived the latter.

<sup>2</sup> Umā Haimavati, another apparition before the assembled gods in Heaven. Ushā, the Dawn, Eos. Urvashī, a celestial nymph celebrated in many a Puranic myth, beloved of gods, demigods and mortals. Originally, a solar myth, or a Dawn Maiden, like most of the others in this roll of names.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. the infant Krishna (Bāla Gopāla) of the Hindu pantheon.

A dancing Shape, a Mystery,  
 On the Deep, the timeless Sea?  
 Child whose face in myriad flashes  
 Lightens through ambrosial tresses,  
 Babbling, babbling starry babble  
 In some desert Space,  
 And the accents of that prattle, 90  
 Born in snatches fitful, faint,  
 Lull the raging hearts of mortals with a winsome child-  
 like grace!

4

Art Thou the Prima Mater,  
 Mother of Heaven and Earth?  
 Ādyā-shakti,<sup>1</sup> Prakṛiti,<sup>2</sup>  
 Or timeless, spaceless Aditi,<sup>3</sup>  
 Witness of Time's birth?  
 Or wouldst Thou rather Magna Mater,  
 Mother of gods and men,  
 Ops, Demeter, Semele, 100  
 Isis, Ceres, Cybele,  
 Teeming Mother Earth!  
 For she suckles and she sows,  
 Parturition's pangs she knows,  
 Dolorous, gracious, harvest-bearing Earth!

Contrast Modern  
 Ideal, l. 359-61

<sup>1</sup> Literally, Primal Energy, the source and origin of Shiva, the Lord of the Universe, and Shakti, his consort.

<sup>2</sup> The matrix of the Cosmos in the Sankhya Philosophy, *Naturd, Urgrund*, from which both the conscious and unconscious world-series are evolved.

<sup>3</sup> The symbol of the Infinite in the *Rigveda*; *Materia Prima*, the Immeasurable conceived as the All-Mother.

## 5

Now Heaven and Earth in trembling pass away!  
 Nor Maid, nor Child,  
 But God's own Head  
 Rises on Thy Prophet, blind  
 In thy awful Night profound, 110  
 The Hour assigned  
 Of Vision's Greater Mystery!  
 And starry Adorations round Thee wait, and pray  
 With Thy kneeling votary.

An emergent  
 subjectivism as  
 contrasted with  
 the old objective  
 attitude. (In the  
*Modern Ideal*  
 the passage is  
 from the indivi-  
 dual to the  
 universal, and  
 back)

## III

## 1

On, on, in myriad waves' progression!  
 Thy ocean tide visits each island shore,  
 And the cosmic Apparition,  
 Borne on tidal roll in splendour  
 Into every creek and inlet, flashes evermore.  
 Shining, it came to my far isle—oh when? 120  
 Was it in the beginningless Yore?

## 2

Meseems 'twas Noon; in Heaven's abysmal blue  
 The isle's mirage would shimmer ghostly white;  
 A Dream of creeks and headlands held the air,  
 As if on angel wings they rose and flew!  
 Heaven descending on Earth!  
 Earth ascending to Heaven!  
 I saw and sinking saw again  
 Till I swam and reeled in pain;



When suddenly, 130

Before my gaze all fixed in rigid ecstasy,  
The solemn train  
Stirred into life, and moved  
To choral dance and strain!

Danced in their ring from shore to shore  
Mountain-ranges, fastnesses;  
Danced the Forests' ancient lineage,  
Fast-locked, swaying in recess;  
Danced the mateless sky, and reeling  
Clasped the sea in vortices!

The Cosmic  
Dance

Contrast the  
Masque of Love  
in *Modern Ideal*,  
ll. 630-41

To the waters' rhythmic glee  
Fiery billows danced outwelling,  
Elemental Harmony!

140

And spreading to the windy glare  
Their floating skiey hair,  
The Muses, danced, and swept the chords  
In lyric pageantry!

*Tumultuosissimamente,*

The cosmic dance, it danced and whirled away  
Into the Void,

150

And vanished inconceivably!

O, Void! abysmal Mystery!

Meseemed one heaveless, dark expanse within me spread  
Endlessly;

Slowly it pulsed, and swooned, and pulsed again,

Contracting slow, till centre-wards was bred,

A throbbing point,—a soul in pain?

And then a something flashed, in darkness dread,  
 A soul within this soul, a tyvain?  
 Slow rose a cosmic panorama in my head, . . . 160  
 Distinct and free!  
 I gazed, and to my eye there answered  
 An eye, in ecstasy!

I feel the Eye o'er sky and plain  
 Lighter,—through whose tangled tresses?  
 I shut my eyes, and there again,  
 The Eye within me burns and presses!  
 And ah! I dance and laugh amain,  
 As any playful child  
 By wonderment beguiled, 170  
 To feel whose new-born joyance tingle,  
 And with shuddering mingle, mingle,  
 Mingle in limb and vein!

Thou cam'st!  
 Was it a Phantasm aery?  
 Ah no!  
 For ever since that visioned hour,  
 Thy choirs of nymph and elf and faery  
 People the vocal Earth and Air,  
 And all the skiey throng that trail and sweep 180  
 Light with Thy smile ineffable the void and vasty Deep!  
 Thou cam'st!  
 A vain weak dream? Ah no!  
 For ever since that mystic hour,

In Titan ranges wild and free,  
 Thy presence girds me round and round,  
 A sleepless Eye, a nameless Power!

IV

1

O Nameless! O Unsearchable!  
 Disporting tricky phantasies,  
 In what cloud-land mysteries?  
 Beguiling, blinding, in thy hazes,  
 Aerial wilderness of mazes,  
 Viewless hazes,  
 Footless mazes,  
 Stilly, eerie, Wild!  
 O sightless! O unseeable!  
 Guileless, unbeguiled!

190

2

O Voice! O Response *de Profundis*!  
 Power of Life's oracular Depths!—  
 Gone! that moaning round and round  
 From the yawning chasm in me, the Spirit's underground!  
 Pan is fled!  
 Pan is dead!  
 Void! Void! Void!  
 In the abyss of the Soul's night  
 I am lone!  
 I am mad!  
 By this ever-storming main,  
 Howling Infinite!

Vide *Modern Ideal*, II. 533-4  
 200 for a different  
 type of aural  
 experience in  
 trance and dream.  
 Cf. *Modern Ideal*,  
 I. 988  
 Cf. *Medieval  
 Ideal*, I. 308

[Swoons]



## 3

[Rising to a thunderstorm]

In dead embrace of pulseless sky, 210

Like the sleeping hills I lie,

When, ah me! thy breath demoniac,

Frenzied, horrid, like a maniac

Sweeps and crashes, roars and rushes,

Rock the Universal Frame!

As when Bhavāni, Shiva's consort,<sup>1</sup>

Reeling naked, drunken, gory,

Hurtles, lightens, bursts in fury,

A thousand Furies slinging flame!

As when Lord Shiva's Tāndava<sup>2</sup> dance, 220

Serpent-poised

In the Void,

To His mystic counter-rhythm,

Must unwind Creation's spiral frame!

Refluent run Time's golden sands!

Kailās<sup>3</sup> trembles,

Meru<sup>4</sup> crumbles,

The orbs unspin themselves away,

Dissolving into nebulous spray!

Till Space a hollow Phantom stands; 230

The Infinite Inane is void of Form and Name!

<sup>1</sup> Of the three figures of the Hindu triad, God as Creator, as Preserver, and as Destroyer, Shiva is the last. Bhavāni is Shiva's spouse, symbolizing his Shakti (Energy). She comes in manifold apparitions of grisly terror.

<sup>2</sup> The Tāndava is Shiva's favourite dance. He will dance the Tāndava at the world's dissolution, to a rhythm the reverse of that of the world's creation.

<sup>3</sup> Shiva's mountain-abode, sometimes conceived as ultra-mundane.

<sup>4</sup> The world's central plateau in the Puranic cosmography.

So flies Thy desolating Might,  
Scattering Ruin, Terror, Madness,  
O'er the abyssmal Deeps!

Till descends the pall of deadness,  
And a vasty, vasty voidness,

And a misty, misty sadness,  
And Thy wrath is hushed and sleeps!

But I sleep not; locked I lie,

In Thy rock-embraçe for aye

240

Unhushed in the winklessness of Thy broad open eye;  
And then, ah me!

An all-engulfing charm of Thine,  
I feel, enskies this sky of mine;  
Whither shall I fly!

4

Still Thy Apparitions come,

One-in-many, many-one,

Like that reveller, the Sun,

Visiting the Western wave;

And I see in phantasies

250

Undulating with the seas,

In thy wavy-flowing glances,

Immortal Naked Radiances,

Thy Anand-Mūrtis,<sup>1</sup> Rāginīs,<sup>2</sup>

Thy Forms of Passion, Pathos, Mirth,

Prefiguring before Time's birth

All Rapturous Glows, all Ecstasies,

All Ravishments of Grief and Bliss,

<sup>1</sup> Shapes of Intelligential Bliss, Divine Beatitudes.

<sup>2</sup> Ideal Forms of Musical Modes.

All Throes of Metamorphosis,

Ahalyā<sup>1</sup>, Arethusa,

260

Contrast *Modern*

*Ideal*, ll. 914-5;

ll. 822-3

(World-Passion  
of Creative Deity)

Ariadne, Niobe,

Iphigen, Antigone,

Damayantī,<sup>2</sup> Draupadī,<sup>3</sup>

Enacting one Eternal Passion in Thy mysteries!

O come, as trains of bright Bacchantès!

Laughing golden Loves and Fancies,

In reel and rout, in linkèd bout,

Breast to breast, and waist to waist,

Whirl away in wavy dances,

Swaying, swerving, curling, curving,

270

Break in spray, glide away,

A myriad Mænades,

A myriad Gopis,<sup>4</sup> Vallabhīs,

In clasps ecstatic, trancèd postures,

Waist to waist, and breast to breast,

Linked as magic shapes of cloudland's fiery flight in

Heaven's array!

Fall ye into Māyā's<sup>5</sup> dance,

Threading Creation's maze, the Cycles of the Suns!

Away! Fly! Dance!

<sup>1</sup> She was turned to a statue; after waiting for ages, she found deliverance at the touch of Rama, an Incarnation of Vishnu.

<sup>2</sup> The heroine of *Nalōpākhyāna*, a model of faithful love, persecuted by the gods.

<sup>3</sup> The proud and passionate heroine of the *Mahābhārata*.

<sup>4</sup> Inamoratas, devotees of Kriṣhna.

<sup>5</sup> Māyā, the illusory world-flux.



Whirl and glance, 280  
 Quiring on myriad Worlds through Heaven's immense  
 expanse!

While the worlds, they tremble, tremble,

Reel and tremble,

Reel and tremble,

Tremble to your unisons!

To the peal of myriad pæans!

To the multitudinous,

Wild uproarious roll of Æons!

V

1

O World-drift cyclical!

O Vortex cosmical!

290

Sempiternal flows Thy tide,

Flows and ebbs away;

Flux and reflux, which but seem,

Rolling, rolling; mystic Dream,

In sportful humour's play!

The Great Illusion knows nor love nor hate!

Thy human mysteries,

Thy Dance of Love,

Thy Dance of Death,

Thy Graces, Pities, Charities,

300

Are as the desert Sphinx impassive,

Implacable as Fate!

O World-drift cyclical!

Vide *Modern  
 Ideal*, l. 544  
 (The Great  
 Illusion)

## 2

Cf. *Modern Ideal*,  
 (The Siren)  
 l. 545; l. 623;  
 ll. 662-3;  
*Medieval Ideal*,  
 ll. 20-7 (The  
 Queen of Destiny)

O Siren of the Ancient Skies,  
 Singing to the Destinies,  
 Thy song the Spheres draws after!  
 With wings uplift, and rapt upturned eyes,  
 To Central Void they move in bliss,  
 Wheeling fast and faster!  
 But One there is that knows Thy guile,  
 Ocean solemn-shadowed Wile,  
 Laughing, ageless laughter!  
 O Siren of the Ancient Skies!

310

## 3

O Siren of the Deep!  
 A lost young creature winging trackless Ocean  
 Am I, Thy Earth-born lover!  
 Creature allured, half-blind with glare,  
 In terror and in fascination,  
 Borne on Thy sea, of Death-in-life bewitched,  
 It hears the Deeps call evermore,  
 It drinks the myriad life of waves,  
 And suffers sea-change, face and vision,  
 Withering, withering, withering ever  
 O'er Thy universal floods!  
 A Spirit *de Profundis* wailing  
 With a failing, failing, failing,  
 O'er Thy deeps of intonation  
 Ever-rocking, ever-calling!  
 O Siren of the Deep!

320

329

THE PASSING OF THE MEDIEVAL IDEAL

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THE RIME OF THE WIZARD KNIGHT



## II

# THE PASSING OF THE MEDIEVAL IDEAL

*(The search for the transcendent conceived as Supernature,  
here presented through a medium of Magian Mysticism,  
and Platonic Knight-errantry as opposed to the  
Catholic dogma and scheme of life)*

## THE RIME OF THE WIZARD KNIGHT

### THE ARGUMENT

#### I

#### *The Vision in the Woods*

The Queen of Earth-born Nymphs and Fays—her grotto and magic circle—her haunting apparition in the hollow of a glen—her train of attendants—as La Belle Dame Sans-Merci, she draws the Wizard Knight into the circle—her ghostly crew of hunters in the Night of Ages—she is the Knight's Destiny whom he has pursued through the ages, and whom he now meets in the elf-haunted woods in the supreme moment of his life

#### II

#### *The Knight of the Human: the Search for Supernature in the Human*

The Knight's adjuration to the Queen of his destiny to accept him as her lover and take him into her own abode in the Deeps—he recounts the story of his search after the secret of life in 'desert Media, Mizraim, Rum'—how he dared the curse

pronounced of old on the seeker after Truth.—he has sworn fealty to the Magian Brotherhood whose disciple he is—he defies the Church, the Empire and the Turks alike, in the name of the Magian Commonwealth of Reason, 'the cosmic order star-writ in Heaven'—though he is accursed and doomed, Truth has still been his host, and he has rescued many a hapless soul from the Wood of Error and the Castle of Enchantment—he has won the Zodiac shield of the Sun for his victories over Untruth, but the dire curse follows him—'in his quest of Knowledge blest, himself it cannot save'—'from illusion free, this knowledge loses life'—the Lady of Sorrows, the Virgin Mother, offers her children a blind bliss and Peace as the reward of meek acceptance, but he would rather burn than be a renegade to Truth for the sake of Peace and Salvation—he also seeks Peace, but the Peace of the Seers who have been conquerors of Destiny through clearness of vision, and are beneficent Wills behind Nature, ever remedying Evil with Good—they are co-workers of Destiny, and the Knight prays that he may be constellated with them by favour of his Queen

## III

*Natura*

The Wizard Knight next recounts how he has been a student of Nature—not of the natural magic of the Magian or Hermetic books, but of the Forms and Species in Things—of signs, signatures and correspondences in the mineral, plant and animal kingdoms of Nature—how the Knight as a medieval Platonist contemplated the Heavens—Nature as a Virgin at the Temple gate—Nature as the veiled Bride—how the Knight rent the veil—the passing of the Bride of Flesh—but a blight and a curse have followed him ever after for rending the Bride's veil—he ever peers through the veil into the Soul's abyss, and everything turns to Naught—thus distraught he appeals to the Queen of his Destiny to take him into the Deeps—he leaps into the glen to meet his Destiny—the passing of the Knight



## THE RIME OF THE WIZARD KNIGHT<sup>1</sup>

*The old, old curse, the mocking taunt!*

### THE VISION IN THE WOODS

The braes were sheen, the shaws were green,  
Each merry leaf would dance;  
On russet brown, the Sun came down  
In showers of golden glance!

But no summer tint of bluish glint  
To the glen would blow adune;  
Enmeshed in the sky-slept woods on high,  
The ghost of a dead white Moon sailed by,  
The element lay a-swoon!

As a shimmering levin in the silent Heaven,  
Against the gathering shades of Even,  
The rill in the glen laughed on;  
But from the spray, the birds so gay,  
Folding plumes with dying Day,  
All mute and chill looked on!

10

<sup>1</sup>Supposed to have been a disciple of the Platonic, Syrian and Magian Mystical Brotherhoods;—the Wizard's curse and its inwardness being here presented (vide ll. 183-207) from a view-point fundamentally different from what has become familiar in Western literature under the influence of legends current in the Christian churches.



In sunset tide, in greenwood wide,  
 Elf-accents whisper close!  
 The deep dark folds of the forest-wolds,  
 They open like a rose . . .

*Contrast Modern  
 Ideal*, ll. 515-21;  
*Ancient Ideal*,  
 ll. 246-55

To a Queenly May, the glen's deep way

20.

All burst forth in a purple gray;

In pallid amethyst shone

An aerial grot, out of cloud-banks wrought;

Weird Dreams, dark-veiled, around Her float,

Winged shapes from twilight Caves of Thought;—

And musing; hollow-eyed, on Naught,

Dark Destiny, seated lone!

\* \* \*

And all across rock-fern and moss

Blew wild and high a bugle!

Each quivering leaf for a wink so brief

Stood still, and wheeled an eagle. . .

30

In sunset tide, the sound so wide,

Widely resounded the wolds,

Away, away, till it did fray

Echo from her mountain-holds.

A romancing Knight peeted down from a height

To a ravine sloping on the right

Deep into elf-light sheen;—

He had pricked fast, with bugle and blast,

By gorse and heather, blazes vast

Where it was Noon's demesne,—

40

*Contrast Modern  
 Ideal*, ll. 646-66  
 (The Siren, Māyā  
 Dolour)

When a glamour fell o'er wood and dell:  
 La Dame Sans Merci her spell!  
 Cawed the wild rook! La Mort in his look,  
 The Knight had chafed on his selic . . .

A spectre lone on his dark-red roan,  
 O'er heath and moor, a blackened zone,  
 Dream-bound he straight rides on,  
 (So a dancing skiff, on the whorlward drift  
 Still-borne at eve, through a mountain rift  
 To sink with the Sun glides on!)

50 Cf. *Modern Ideal*,  
 ll. 837-42

Till the Sun's red ire set the hills afire,  
 The flames shot up in spire on spire,  
 The spurs were in darkness drowned;  
 The shadows grew; a ghostly crew  
 Rode down on the Knight, halloo! halloo!  
 (In a hapless quest the ages through,  
 Nightly doth the hunt, resound)

Contrast *Modern  
 Ideal*, ll. 336-9

Cf. *Modern Ideal*,  
 ll. 251-5

They passed; in vain at the phantom train  
 The Knight did tilt, then blew amain  
 And rode to the opened woods,  
 Where the Nymph of the soil spreads a deity's toil,  
 Spinning with Earth's loom an endless coil,  
 And only Fancy broods!

60

## II

### THE KNIGHT OF THE HUMAN

The Knight had heard of the eldritch guard  
 In those woods' deepest zone;



For a moment he shook, then mused o'er the brook,  
On Destinies high and lone;

High Destinies, as had been his  
To meet and mate, stern Powers, I wis,  
Walking Life's desolate paths. . . .

70

(Hear Trismegistus Hermes tell us  
Of the high-destined Nymphs of Earth and *Coelus*,  
Who serve their veiled Queen's wraths!)

\* . . . \*

Lo! the sunset flies fore, the twilight comes o'er;  
Dream-swift, an abysmal Hollow"  
Opes and uncleaves, when the Childe, as leaves  
Wind-driven, the May would follow. . . .

He knelt on the ground, Love taught him the sound;  
'O Queen of Nymphs, and Fays!  
My Queen ordained, though dark I am stained,  
Thy Love is my highest praise!

80

'Unspeakable is Thy presence, I wis,  
Each antediluvian cloud could miss  
The glory on that day,

When Heaven and Earth commixed in Thy birth,  
The mountains split from girth to girth,  
And dark Thy lightning all burst forth;  
'The green life bent to Thy sway.

Cf. *Ancient Ideal*,  
ll. 19-23 (The  
birth of the  
Godhead);  
*Modern Ideal*,  
ll. 182-90  
(The birth of  
Psyche)



'That sway, O Queen, felt, saw, I ween,  
 Old Hermes, ages gone;  
 In his hidden weird lore, I delved of yore;  
 This hour my quest is done!'

90

And the Knight did groan,—the woods made moan—  
 'O Queen of Realms Underground!  
 My Queen, ordained, now stricken and stained  
 Thy love make free and sound!

'O lead me on, though curse-begone,  
 • Let me not stay behind;  
 But deep into the mysteries true,  
 Secrets of the world-life blind,

100

'Which walk confest in Thy Deeps of Rest,  
 O lead me to Deeps intent!  
 No more to follow, ride and follow,  
 Tilting at phantoms cold and hollow,  
 On an endless track unkent!'

Vide supra,  
 ll. 55-8

And the Knight glowed strange; through the deep  
 woods' range

As though twilight rushed into sunset again!

It was an unearthly glare  
 Rapt him as he told his deeds weird and bold,

110

How to the Fates his life he had sold,  
 Daring the curse, pronounced of old

On him who would see Truth bare!

Cf. *Modern Ideal*,  
 ll. 539-41  
 (The Curse);  
 vide infra,  
 ll. 183-98

Crest-helmet doffed, his eyes' fire scoffed  
 White hair that streamed unshorn!

All times had he seen? You might doubt from his mien  
 If the Wight was in sooth due-born!

'Nor hermit nor saint, but this Childe's cursed taint,  
Unholy, did dispel 170

Contrast *Modern  
Ideal*, ll. 596-614  
(The Fires and  
Furies in the  
Soul)

The Soul's deep gloom and hapless doom,  
The rot, the shame, the lying tomb,—  
The rage, the fury—Hell!

Cf. *Modern Ideal*,  
ll. 481-7

'And the Flesh's Lust I've trodden and crusht;  
The Dance of the deadly Sins, is husht;  
Sin's bondsman I set free.  
By Magian spell, (nor book nor bell)  
Truth centred in a power of Will  
Beneficent, good, holy still,  
My eye gains mastery. 180

Cf. *Modern Ideal*,  
ll. 539-41;  
ll. 664-6 (The  
Curse motif);  
vide supra,  
ll. 112-3

'Knowledge and Power have been my dower,  
Nor abject Faith nor Fears that cower;  
But the curse, it followeth me,  
The old, old curse, the mocking taunt,  
That hierophant or corybant,  
Magian, Manichee,—

'All thaumaturgic, dēmiurgic,  
Fiats shall he wield or brave,  
But all his quest of knowledge blest,<sup>1</sup>  
Himself it cannot save! 190

'O misery! from illusion free  
This knowledge loses life!  
For Beauty and Love, and Pity above,  
Are still with illusion rife!

<sup>1</sup> Gnosis.



'The Forms so fair, they vanish as air,  
My cursed embrace they flee!

A quenched fire, this thirst so dire,  
The raging Hell I dree!

Cf. *Modern Ideal*,  
ll. 547-50,

'The Lady of Sorrows, from Death she borrows  
The snowy pall of Peace;

210

The Power of Meekness, of weeping Weakness,  
Of praying Charities

Cf. *Modern Ideal*,  
ll. 798-803

'Are hers, the Mother's; her children she gathers  
And folds them blind in bliss;

I'd rather burn than renegade turn,

The right to Peace and Hope thus earn,  
And Truth and Freedom miss!

Cf. *supra*,  
ll. 197-8

'But *Thy* Nymphs and Fays have eternal days  
Of unwearied innocent calm!

Earth's children, free of Destiny,

Of rot and drouth and qualm!

210

'With thee, too, the Seers, Thy wise compeers,  
Whose eye the ideal firmament clears;

No longer Destiny's minions

But co-workers free; the Good they see,

The Spheres they hear, their harmonie,

Poised on Peace's pinions!

'By Earth, (Great Mother (mine, thine, none other!))

• O let me not from thee stay,

But deep into the mysteries true,

220



Ideal firmament's clear view,  
 Secrets of Life's, Mind's, sway,  
 Which walk confest in Thy Deeps of Rest,  
 O lead me to Deeps int'nt,  
 No more to follow, ride and follow,  
 Tilting at phantoms cold and hollow,  
 Phantoms lank and sere and sorrow,  
 On an endless track unkent!

## III

*Natura*

Crest-helmet doffed, his eyes' fire scoffed  
 White hair that streamed unshorn; 230  
 All times he had seen, you might doubt from his mien  
 If the Knight was in sooth due-born!

From countenance, look, at whose dark depth you shook,  
 The far-off ages shone!  
 There Past, Future met; on Zodiac shield was set  
 Each, constel-la-ti-on!

A student free, a solitary,  
 A monk uncloistered (the sky  
 Was e'er in me, a reverie!)  
 A deep-versed student was I

240

'Contrast *Ancient  
 Ideal*, ll. 29-37

'Of the characters, yclept the stars,  
 That 'scribe the Book of Wisdom's verse  
 In mystic scroll of the Heavens;

Of the networks of vein, in macrocosm brain,  
This tingling, living, glowing frame,—

This Earth some Deity leavens?

'Whose harvestings, in deep-folled rings,  
So rich and ripe and various,

'From the husks did I sift? Whose masks did I lift,  
All semblances vicarious?

250

'The shells and the sand, they cannot stand,  
For the Wash, it washeth away;  
Only the shore they hide e'er-more  
Endureth fast alway!

'So things may pass and vanish in mass  
To the chaos of broken moulds;  
But the Image behind the things we find  
So changeful, e'er She holds.

'This Image rare, *Natura* bare,  
I saw and seeing ran mad!  
Her footprint sylphic, her hieroglyphic,  
On primal Earth made me glad!

260

'Not symbol literal or mystic numeral,  
On Magian or Sibylline leaf,—  
But the Riddle Etern I'd read, I'd learn  
To decipher *in things* Her brief

'Marks and gleamings, aspects, seemings,  
Signature, influence,  
Sympathic, astral, chymic, terrestrial,—  
The inner corr'spondence

270



Of plant and mineral, and creatures in general,  
 Revealing Her plastic Powers;  
 The Forms I'd find, each natural kind,  
 With limbec torture, in coils blind,  
 In starlit vigil's hours,

'Cf. *Modern Ideal*,  
 ll. 66-7;  
 ll. 78-80

'Till the eye grew dim, the head did swim,  
 The Earth a crypt in a catacomb seem,  
 A Trophonius-cave that dazed!  
 And I turned to behold Heaven's stars unrolled,  
 Unmeasured, fathomless, untold;  
 On *Myriad Nature* gazed!

280

'Contrast *Modern  
 Ideal*, ll. 947-60  
 (Urania-Psyche);  
*Ancient Ideal*,  
 ll. 63-72  
 (Urania)

'She seemed to wait at the Temple Gate,  
 A virgin clad in robe of state  
 On Heaven's bright inlaid floor!  
 Or a half-veiled Bride, some Prince's pride,  
 Her handmaids decking her aside  
 At the nuptial chamber's door!

'Of that Veil I stript Her! (Pluton with his sceptre  
 Shield me from infernal deeps,  
 And make me his peer in his calm and clear  
 Godlike glance that sweeps

290

'An endless sweep o'er fields of Death and Sleep)  
 No Veil of sense for me!  
 The temple was shent, the Veil was rent,<sup>1</sup>  
 The Bride of Flesh did pass, being blent  
 In Greater Mystery!

\* \* \*

<sup>1</sup> An esoteric interpretation of the incidents of Christ's Passion.



'Twas thus I grew an adept so true,  
Ranging beyond the sense-world's view,  
Beyond *Natura's* Pole!

No emblematic Dove, no Eagle of Great Jove,  
But Yogi's eyeball fixed above,  
Rapt in the Cosmic Soul!

'Fair things of Earth, I've proved your worth,  
But fair things' love can't build my hearth,  
The deeps call me, O May!

Earth's Day and Light the Curse doth blight,  
The curse of the-rent-Veil-e'er-in-sight,  
Peering into the Abyss, Soul's Night!  
O dark to me, Earth's day!

'Then leave me not, in a hollow Grot,  
By dark shapes haunted, curse-distraught,  
The Forms so fair all turned to Naught,—  
O leave me not behind!  
But deep into the mysteries true,  
Ideal firmament's clear view,  
Secrets of Nature, Mind,

'Which walk confest in Thy Deeps of Rest,  
O lead me to Deeps intent  
That I may follow, a constellate Fellow  
Of the Wills Beneficent,

'The Wills, the Seers, Thy wise Compeers,  
Whose eye the ideal firmament clears,  
No longer Destiny's minions,

300 Cf. *Modern Ideal*,  
l. 550  
(The Eagle  
Symbol)

Cf. *Ancient Ideal*,  
l. 318; ll. 325-7

Cf. *Ancient Ideal*,  
l. 205

310 Cf. supra, ll. 23-7;  
*Ancient Ideal*,  
ll. 315-7;  
*Modern Ideal*,  
ll. 624-8

320

But co-workers free; the Good they see,  
 The Spheres they hear, their harmonie,  
 Poised on Peace's pinions!



*Note.*—A late seventeenth century version of this old *Rime* ends thus:  
 Ages have passed since the doomed Knight dashed  
 Through this valley, distraught in mood;  
 And the valley today laughs bright and gay,  
 Nor the shadows of Ages brood!

THE MODERN IDEAL

A VISION OF PSYCHE, OR THE  
QUEST OF LIFE



### III

## THE MODERN IDEAL

(*World-history down to 1913*)

### EPIC FINALE

The Conquest of Spirit over Death, achieved  
through world-experience

'Self dead, self risen as World-soul.'

## A VISION OF PSYCHE, OR THE QUEST OF LIFE

### THE ARGUMENT

*The Prelude: From the Individual to the Universal*

The 'hero' of the Quest is a homeless wanderer. In his youth he had lived in an island in the Pacific where he had suffered a tragic loss. The girl he loved had, on the eve of their wedding, disappeared, and it was supposed that she had been carried off by the sea rising in a storm. It was, afterwards known that driven by a hunger for wild life she had joined a wild tribe of Pacific Islanders, and been hailed as their Queen; but after a short span of heroic and adventurous rule she had been exposed on the rocks and then burnt at the stake as an offering to the tribal god at an omophagic rite.

The hero wanders in search of a Wisdom that is able to master Death, not Death in the physical sense, but Death conceived as the dark Power in life that frustrates all ideal strivings, or as the irresistible stream of tendency that drives souls to

their doom. In the Quest of this Wisdom he ransacks, one after another, the realms of the Soul, of Nature, and of Man in History, and finds everywhere the 'reign absolute' of the leagued Powers of brute Matter and blind Sense. The merely subjective life of the Soul ends in illusion and mockery, a year's meditation in a solitary cave leaving him subject ever after to *recurrent fits of Phantasy* (ll. 72-6). Nature shows the Leviathan in convulsion. And the coming kingdom of man, supposed to be the Finale of the evolution of the Spirit in the history of creation, is a vain dream. Even Conscience preaches a holocaust, the sacrifice of every individual for all individuals, a universal *Harakiri*.

*The Interlude: a Dream-fulfilment of this Soul-drama*

The leagued Powers, 'forces primeval', are sworn to abase the God-in-Man. This is how in the hero's mind the conflict between the individual soul and the universal order in Nature comes to be symbolized as a war between Man and the Gods. The dimensions of the original problem are now enlarged. *From the individual's Quest of Life and Wisdom, he passes to the problem of the redemption of Humanity as a whole.* How to redeem Humanity from bondage is his dream. He broods over the myths and legends of a Universal Redeemer,—he dreams nightly of a youth tied to the stake and a virgin exposed on the rocks, and recognizes in them dream-symbols of passion-pale Humanity and Earth the Virgin-Mother,—he muses on the mystery of 'the Great Tribulation, which is the soul of Being'; but in a world bestrewn with wrecks, he realizes that the soul is still unwrecked, is still 'king absolute'; and then in deepest gloom, there suddenly flashes to him a Vision of the 'Just man militant', who, 'in soul-war against the iron Universe' seeks to win 'an inner Peace beyond the Fates'. He, the warrior of the Soul, is inspired by Psyche. For neither Force, nor Law and Justice which must have force for ultimate sanction, can emancipate man, but only Psyche, the Soul's Vision of deathless Love.



The advent of a Liberator, a prophet of Psyche, is the hero's cherished hope. But soon his Promethean hope is dashed to the ground. *In a dream he hears an oracular Voice revealing to him the futility of all such hopes of a universal or external Redeemer, and the necessity of inner purification and illumination of each individual soul for achieving the Spirit's conquest over death.* Psyche's curse, he is told, was to wander through Earth and Heaven and Hell in search of a deathless Love, and thus to be purged of mortality in Life's central fire; and that curse falls vicariously on every soul that seeks deliverance from bondage to death. 'Not by negation is the world annulled' (l. 535).

### *The Finale: the Passion*

The struggle for deliverance is now transferred from without within; for the league of Evil has planted its standard not in Matter or Force outside, but in man's own conscious self. The Passion of Humanity through the ages has resulted from this cause, and not from the chains forged by priestcraft or statecraft, labour-sweater or monopolist.

The hero is in despair, for he realizes the impossibility of deliverance from this internecine feud between soul and sense; the brute is man's make, his origin—how can man 'crucify' his origin? He cries for Peace; but where is Peace except in the Void?

The hero's mental crisis at this stage—he suffers from a strange malady. His brain becomes, as it were, the brain of the world, and the entire history of human Passion through the Ages passes in procession through his disordered brain. In this medley he has a vision of 'one majestic Shape in splendour veiled, the Mistress of this planetary world'. This is not Psyche, the Vision of deathless Love, but Māyā or Dolour, Psyche's counterfeit and double, the Siren who revolves in her hand a crystal globe; and the generations of man pass before her, see her image in the crystal globe, and prostrate themselves. But whoever looks beyond the image in the crystal to the Siren



herself is seized with frenzy, but is rescued in the end, after the mortal throes of Passion, by the passing of Psyche. Our hero is one of this hapless crew. Thrice he looks beyond, and thrice he experiences this frenzy, from which he is delivered by the passing of Psyche in three deathbed scenes which he witnesses—off the Sicilian coast, in an Italian convent, and in Tokyo's slums—scenes which depict the deliverance of the human soul from three characteristic Passions, the Ancient, the Medieval and the Modern; in other words, the Lucretian, the Dantean and the Rousseauan madness. Each passion is driven by its own fury to self-destruction, and it is only thus that in the moment of passing a Passion is purified and redeemed by the passing of Psyche. The hero thus recapitulates in his person the Passion of Humanity through the Ages, and it is this world-experience which makes him realize that the passion of his own individual life is part of the drama of divine suffering, is but 'World-Passion of Creative Deity'. This is how the struggle in his life between the individual and the universal, a struggle symbolized by the war between man and the gods, is set at rest. And by vicariously re-living the Passion of Humanity, he frees himself from his own individual Passion. And so in the course of his wanderings, ever 'fleeing like Night from land to land', he acquires an attitude of cosmic acquiescence. He is on the road to Freedom and Immortality.

Now he is drawn unawares to the shores of the sea which had witnessed his love and his tragic loss. It is a summer evening, and he sees a pageant in Heaven, silent Shadows rehearsing in dumb show man's age-long story. And here at last the Passion of Humanity through the ages, the 'World-Passion' of Creative Deity, is revealed in a sterner and more tragic aspect than that of love's episode or fantasia. For it is the final passage of the hero's story, the sacrificial Passion of the tribal Mother, which is seen to be the symbol of the 'World-Passion' of Creative Deity, and not the earlier love-episode in that story. And then he falls into a half-swoon; half-

dream, sees the vision of Psyche in the Heavens, and hears a canticle of Life, 'chanting the law of man's deliverance, Wisdom to master death, the Power of Life'.

At break of dawn he wakes in the reef on which he had dreamt: 'the tide was slowly rising.'

Was it 'a cosmic voice, the soul's ventriloquy'?—or perchance 'a cosmic image printed on the novæ and here, no voucher for an all-beyond'?

A VISION OF PSYCHE, OR THE  
QUEST OF LIFE

*An Essay in Neo-idealistic Poetic Art*<sup>1</sup>

THE PRELUDE

*The Quest turned outwards*

A homeless wanderer, me ghost-like shook,  
As palsy shakes the frame, one passion'd quest,  
Wisdom to master Death,—since *She* was lost,  
Whose silent shadow floated on my soul,  
A stamp of Life's own image to sustain  
The heart, a tint of Mother Earth to tame  
Ethereal hues, whose glare my spirit dazed!

My quest of Wisdom how to master Death!  
To master Death, not Him that shrouded sits  
In the blank mist, Death's mask,—but the dark Power 10  
In life, whose triumph rides o'er captive souls  
In agony, whose train are purposes  
Frustrate, unborn, the ghosts of might-have-beens,  
Goals but appointed to be ever missed,  
Premeditated lapse, set snare of chance,  
Grave freaks of Misrule in Life's Revelry!

Cf. *Medieval  
Ideal*, ll. 122-40  
(Wander-lust)

The twin forms  
of Death

<sup>1</sup> Neo-idealistic Poetic Art: an art which is idealistic in inner meaning and content but naively realistic and 'beautifully objective' (*hübschobjektiv* as Goethe has it) in form and manner.



Death, the unful-  
filler  
Vide infra,  
ll. 866-71

Is there no Wisdom that can still fulfil  
The unfulfilled, as though this Death were not?

20

Death, the fatal-  
drift  
Vide infra,  
ll. 873-84

To master Death, not Him who waits beyond,  
The super-Nature's Shadow, but the brute  
Dumb Nature, in whose womb is Life conceived,  
Abortive life, that never sees the light;  
This irresistible stream of tendency  
In which immersed, to the backwaters' waste  
Souls are borne wailing,—to be ever lost!  
Is there no Power of Life that still avails  
Against this drift, no Power of Love to save?

\* \* \*

Wisdom to Master Death the Power in Life!

*Nature Unveiled*

'Twas in a cave o'er-hung by a beetling cliff  
By a pine forest skirting northern seas;  
There self-withdrawn I meditated deep.  
A priest I'd be of human mysteries,  
Questioning still (if haply they might yield  
This wisdom) all soul-instincts delicate  
And sensitive, all sense of super-sensibles,

30

Gossamer sheens, bright films, transcendencies:  
Rare glimpses of an inner Life Etern  
Caught on that cliff beetling o'er foaming seas:

Exhilarations, flushes, buoyancies,  
Like gales that bring whiffs of the cold salt spray,  
Old Ocean's smell, to the far inlander;

40

The restless flashings of the Soul's horizon,  
 As of charged clouds that drive before the blast,  
 Or thousand glancing hammers in Life's forge  
 That flames with instinct's subterranean fires;

The clair-obscure of the Soul's polar night  
 With far heard breakers of an open sea  
 Booming beyond the great Ice Barrier;

Sun-birth of Truth from the Godhead of Truth,  
 Transcendent Vision on the mountain top  
 Quickening the Soul's wings with a Phæton's fury,  
 Whose conscious ether burns empyreal;

50

Or Fancy's twilight cloudlands through which stray  
 Phantoms of many-mooded glooms and glares,  
 Laughing in madness, listening or a-stare  
 To catch the intermittent flash or roll;  
 Or Beauty's myriad imagings of Love,  
 Dream-children all, gold-haired and laughter-eyed,  
 In silver cloudlets touched with rosy dawn;

\* \* \*

This multishadowy phantasmagory  
 Of the inner soul-life, subtly changing, delicate,  
 Ethereal as the interpresent gloom  
 Of Imagery in some fair sleepy lake!

60

Till by such spiritual dioptrics viewed,  
 The shadow turned the substance, substance shadow,  
 And this fair solid globe would melt away,  
 In ghostly apparitions, luminous mists:



Only the silhouette of a mocking Face  
 Would ever vanish in their vanishings,  
 On that lone cliff beetling o'er foaming seas!

70

Wisdom to master Death this Power in Life!

Contrast *Ancient  
 Ideal*,  
 ll. 250-9;  
 vide infra,  
 ll. 172-4  
 (Recurrent fits of  
 Phantasy);  
 also ll. 136-50

\* \* \*  
 And oft in soul-storm, suddenly beca'med,  
 Visions in tumbling tides coursed through my bl'zin.  
 This sudden frenzy of the seeing soul,  
 This world-dissolving Phantasy that rapt me,  
 Was it the gift of that lone blinding cave?

Such elemental consciousness self-spun  
 In twilight cave imprisoned my dim soul,  
 In whose long shadows danced and whirled all ghosts  
 Of Love and Hope, as on Lethean shores!

80

All sick and faint I turned; like a mountain rill  
 That leaps from cavern dark, I wandered wide  
 O'er gorse and purple heather, following oft  
 A trail of golden mist upon the glaces,  
 To bathe my spirit in the morning dew  
 Where wreathed wood-nymphs trip it light and free.

I was one with the woods; my body, the Earth;  
 I budded in the buds, and burgeoned fresh  
 In the green shoots; the tendrils were my veins;  
 My eyes blossomed on every bush; my arms  
 Waved in the tall spiked grass; in the white fog  
 The hill-side breathed with me; the twirling leaves

90



Vibrated through the pores of my own skin;  
I was one with the woods; my body, the Earth.

I was one with all creatures; their life, mine:  
I sang on every bough; from rock to rock  
I leapt, snorting the crisp air; in the stream  
I frisked or dived or bathed my plumage gay;  
A flight of cranes, I glided, swayed and curved,  
And the lone eagle poised me in mid-air: 100  
I was one with all creatures; their life, mine.

Until one reddening dawn, in a dell serene  
(My woodland dreams had crossed the world's wide belt)  
The jargoning of birds was in my ears,  
The winds came to me from Heaven's sloping marge,  
I saw the still Earth's heaving dark-green mounds  
And climbed the sunny steeps; on a breezy height,  
Far above a wooded amphitheatre  
That sloped to a dim coast line on the north,  
Lone I stood, gazing on Creation's face, 110  
Our Mother, ancient, fecund, e'er renewed!  
I saw Her spirit brooding, like the dove,  
'Midst susurrations of the ripening corn,  
Saw her with mother-instinct rear and mould  
With a curve's plastic stress and sweep the beauty  
Of jungle bird and deer, saw rear and mould  
Peacock's starred tail and parrot's mail and crest,  
Respectful of the course of love and being  
In every living atom, speck of life!  
But as I looked, out crept a speck of life: 120

A spotted spider, from the mottled grass  
 'Neath a huge boulder, caught her tiny mate  
 In lustful grip and dealt the fatal hug,  
 A spotted lizard darted from a crevice,  
 Glaring; a spotted jay flew at it and screeched;  
 A hooded hawk swooped down; the royal eagle  
 Sailed in, and eyed the quarry from the heavens!

Then mists rose from the sea like a ca-k Djinn  
 And coiled them all in folds voluminous;  
 The mists rolled on and blotched the scene;  
     Earth's face  
 Was drawn to a grotesque with a monstrous frown!

130

The mists rolled on; the boulders loomed and  
 shimmered,  
 A dance of giant skeletons on the hills.

The mists rolled on, and writhing serpentlike  
 Coiled and uncoiled; in a dense clammy fog  
 All was wiped out, all but a dreadful gulf  
 That gaped, and shut, and gaped, like a blind mouth,  
 Then shaped into a bottomless abyss,  
 A crater—as in a Mesozoic sea-bed,  
 Leviathan's haunt—in whose vortices,  
 Meseemed, swam round and round all hideous  
     slimy shapes,

140

Dark Monsters of the Deep, seadragon wroth,  
 Ravening rhinodon and strangling octopod,  
 Death's minions pasturing on some steep  
 Mountainous mass of coiled ugliness



With universal gurglings, hissings, groans!  
 I saw where throned in the universal Deep  
 Eternal Hunger sat his Queen beside,  
 The Nightmare Fear-of-Death, dark Shapes  
 That rule, misrule, the chaos-dance of Death-in-  
 Life!

156

Wisdom to master Death the Power in Life!

*The Pageant of History Revealed*

From Nature's festal sacrifice I fled;  
 From the stern wilds and rugged glooms I turned  
 To blazoned cities in their pomp and glare,  
 Life's furnaces that roar and rush through space!

\* \* \*

I was an Eye historic watching still  
 Humanity deploy, an endless march,  
 That panoramic movement of the world  
 Through which the world-soul works its own redemption,  
 On the wide plains 'neath the slow-rolling stars: 160  
 A storied movement, working out the beast,  
 And working in the man, not Instinct's slave,  
 But Conqueror, emancipated through  
 The Family, the Church, the School, the State,  
 Hierarchies, aristocracies, plutocracies,  
 Thrones, Federations, Parliaments of Man,  
 Till bodied forth in glory visible  
 The Kingdom come, the Sovereign State of Man!  
 Then came to me the pageant of man's story—  
 On the Acropolis—'twas a sultry noon—

170



Vide supra,  
ll. 74-5

I drowed in the broken columns' shadow; sudden  
That frenzy of the seeing soul rapt me . . .  
As on Time's conning tower I stood; an Eye  
Historic, in Time's centre fixed, I gazed;  
Before me spread the dreadful Night of Ages:  
I saw the blooded glares of the Earth's prime,  
Tearing her darkness, norrent, densely alive  
With many-wing'd whizz and clatter/many-mouth'd hiss,  
Swoops of sky-darkening Pterodactyls, Saurians,  
Tussle and roar of early mammoth-brood, 180  
Red carrion fights of human kites obscene!

\* \* \* \* \*

Contrast *Ancient  
Ideal*, ll. 19-23;  
*Medieval Ideal*,  
ll. 83-9  
(Birth of the  
Godhead)

Slow broke the golden Dawn, Astraea's reign;  
Through wriggling coiled life of worm, slug, newt,  
Slow burst wing'd Psyche soaring in Heaven's light,  
Free Spirit; her transcendence eagle-like,  
Victor o'er instinct's devious urgency!

Vide *Medieval  
Ideal*, l. 151

Her soaring might she drank from Glory's urn,  
The Sun of the ideal firmament,  
To breathe her native empyrean clear,  
The realm etern, the Sovereign State of Reason! 190  
So from that tower Man's kingdom I descried . . .  
A sun-clear day-dream on the Acropolis!

The vista changed: a hubbub filled the air,  
The tramp of thundering legions; overhead,  
The imperial eagle flapped its wings; beneath,  
The *Pax Romana* ordered Earth, and reared  
An altar to the State of Law: it reeked of blood!

A change came o'er the spirit of the scene:  
 As in a dream-like medley of dissolving visions,  
 Into that vista floated high in heaven,  
 Huge cloudy symbols, images uncouth,  
 Grey iron towers and turrets, donjon keeps,  
 Vaults, fosses, bastions, frowning battlements  
 Tumbling and toppling o'er cloud-precipice,  
 Like Pelion, Ossa, on Olympus piled,  
 Till slow they loomed, a massive shape, Bastille's!

200

But a black whirlwind rose incontinent,  
 And in red fury multitudinous  
 Burst that portentous cloudy mass o'erhead;  
 Whereof the wrecks were like the dragon's teeth  
 Broadcast; where'er they fell, the Earth grew black  
 With fire fuliginous, a Vulcan's smithy,  
 And in Tartarean cities' roaring furnaces,  
 Bound Titan to a machine's wheel once more! . . . .  
 So serfdom was renewed in Demos's reign!  
 His wide demesne the vista darkly showed  
 Bouldered with factories and gashed with pits;  
 From which rose hubbub, thick with blighting smoke  
 From a thousand chimneys; dragon-like sailed by  
 Huge wings of machine monsters with a whir,  
 And in the thrum thrum thrum jerked out to space  
 Meseemed I heard voices in colloquy:  
 'Is this Man's kingdom?'

210

220

'Man, bound, manacled,'  
 'Sold in the mart,'  
 'And fattened for the yoke!'

The First French  
 Revolution



Then in metallic whir a mocking taunt:

'The ass-eared Human'

'Whose sure touch makes gold?

'Unprofiting . . . ?

'Unless to forge his chains!'

Last rolled the peal of a metallic doom:

'Crushed, mangled, 'neath the huge red iron wheel

Of servile labour by himself still turned!' 230

Heaven smiled serene, intense, unfathomable,

Beyond the smoke and hubbub; and I cried

From the tower top against that treacherous Peace:

'Who trapped Man first? What Gods primeval planned?'

Then like a tide the hum of humanity

Rose in my ears, a Voice of generations,

Echoed from the old empty vault of Heaven:

'He, the blind God, gave a too fecund seed

And plied the goad; brute Matter laid the bar

On Earth's soil, an increasing barrenness! 240

The trick was done, the Titan overthrown

And broken since on labour's wheel self-turned!

Till Knowledge the Redeemer risé on Earth and make

The barren fecund, fecund barren, seed,

And from this pristine curse set man's race free!

The Generations yet abide the hour . . . .'

Last from the tower a universal scene

I saw, the man-hunt in the Wood of Ages!

Here Death is rampant still; all-Highest here

The jungle Law, the old predacious plan; 250

Vide infra,  
ll. 280-1



Contrast  
*Medieval Ideal*,  
ll. 55-8

And in these woods is Nimrod, mighty hunter  
Before the Lord; the hunt resounds; Death chases Life,  
Life, Death; Pleasure and Pain in circle wheel,  
And Shadows Shadows flee; the game of War  
Unleashes deep-mouthed hell-hounds in full cry;  
And black, white, red, by turns, the Terrors stalk,  
Pogroms and blazes, barricades, *émeutes*  
And Armageddons; Gog with Magog fights!

\* \* \*

Slow vanished tower and vista; I was left  
At the foot of a broken column staring.  
So closed the pageant of man's history:  
A moment's phantasy on a drowsy noon!

260

And since that noon, to me from top of tower,  
Minar or soaring dome, the silent vision  
Of a monumental city e'er renews,  
In Heaven o'erhead, the pageant of man's story.

*The Great Void as Universal Destiny*

O Forces of the prime, I saw your might  
Conspiring with the stars! Against your hosts  
I urged no pygmy proletariat war;  
I cursed no petty mannikin that plays  
A tyrant Punch upon the puppet stage.  
No labour sweater, no monopolist;  
I blamed no craft of State, no wile of priest  
Or mandarin, blind tools of a blind Power!  
For thine, O Primal Night, is sovran sway;

270

Thou mak'st the victim, and the tyrant too,  
 And mak'st the tyrant victim, evermore!  
 Thine the Great Cycle, Thine the Wheel of Law;  
 Thou hast set on the throne invincible  
 The leagued Powers of brute Matter and blind Sense · 280  
 Sworn to abase transcendent God in Man;—  
 That in the End, in thy eternal Void,  
 Both Throne and League and Primal Night and all  
 Be swallowed up, O Vortex cosmical!

Vide supra,  
 ll. 238-41

Cf. *Ancient Ideal*,  
 l. 190

Not is the soul's charter inviolate:  
 The Power in Nature's System has usurped  
 Authority as inner rule of life!  
 Conscience, the oracle, phillippizes too,  
 For Peace' sake sanctifies by a slave code  
 The individual's blind forced sacrifice · 290  
 Of Life, life's worth and love, for common good;  
 Though every soul being immolated sure  
 (The immolators surest in their turn),  
 The common good is common—*Harakiri!*  
 Deliverance from this omophagic fite  
 Of man, at once the victim sacrifice  
 And priest who slays himself, shall there be none?  
 Wisdom to master Death this Power in Life! · 298

For this recurrent  
 motif vide infra,  
 ll. 879-82; ll.  
 439-41; ll. 352-8.  
 (But in the pre-  
 sent context the  
 rite is generalized  
 into a symbol of  
 man's self-sacrifice  
 which is the  
 law of conscience,  
 —and of man's  
 self-annihilation,  
 the equally inexo-  
 rable demand of  
 mystic commu-  
 nion and Yoga)



THE INTERLUDE<sup>1</sup>*A Dream-fugue**Being a Dream-fulfilment of Coming History*

'Psyche, Urania,—who hath known her name?  
Unless they be one as the wiser deem!'

O Thou Great Self of Universal Man!

Passion-pale God, to whom the Ages raise

300

All altars and all Churches in the heart!

O Spirit passion-pale, O God in Man,

Dreaming fair dreams, that fade not at the dawn,

Of fairy lands beyond the sunset seas,

Where a Hand e'er beckons and a Voice e'er calls!

O Thou that shap'st to Beauty empty clouds,

The unsubstantial Pageantry of Heaven—

Filling the Great Void with all loveliness,

Imagined Perfectness and Sanctity!

O Spirit passion-pale, O God in Man!

310

Fore-written by the high gods in conclave full

'Thy bondage to brute Matter's primal sway:

The dry-and-damp rot of the soul entombed

In Nature's limy-slimy charnel-house!

O Spirit passion-pale, O God in Man!

*The Struggle Without*

Old Myths with old, old faces peered on me:

Dreams of Prometheus, Orpheus, Hercules,

Perseus the Gorgon-slayer, then a crew

<sup>1</sup> The Interlude is concerned only with the subconscious and the super-conscious layers of personality. Of the two planes of Reality, 'events' and their 'meaning', the Interlude relates only to the second.



*Medieval Ideal,*  
 II. 55-60  
 (Great Quest, the  
 Quest Eternal)

Of Magian, Manichee and Mithraist,  
 A train of ghostly hunters in dumb cry,  
 Followed by a Wizard Knight; and each in turn,  
 I lived and acted, in the Night of Ages,  
 Until there burst a fulgence on the Void,  
 As to the Titan on Imaus steep,  
 Psyche Etern, Vision of deathless Love,<sup>1</sup>  
 Deliverer of Earth and Heaven, of Man and God!  
 I saw the apocalypst: Psyche Etern,  
 Crowned with glad Majesty, ensphered sublime,  
 Beyond the Æonic cycle of the Suns!  
 Turf round and round in the clear Crystalline  
 Her mystic World-Rose, fold in fold concentric;  
 Burns and still burns with unconsuming fire!

320

Vide infra,  
 II. 953-7

330

A change came o'er the Spirit of the dream: . . .  
 Old Myths with new, new faces peered on me;  
 And in the night my dream would take this shape:  
 Darkling I saw a Spirit passion-pale  
 Tied to an altar stake to the Furies' dance . . .  
 Sudden a sound of ritual drumming filled  
 The air . . . 'Burn at the stake,' it said, 'to ashes  
 Consume' . . . I looked—the Face would change; the  
 scene

340

An ocean isle; a virgin lay exposed

Vide supra,  
 I. 300;  
 I. 302; I. 315

Cf. infra,  
 II. 883-4

<sup>1</sup> The two most outstanding creations of the Greek mythopœia, Psyche the soul's Vision of deathless Love, and Prometheus the Deliverer are interwoven in this story of the modern Quest of Life. The antagonistic forces are symbolized in this story by the savage ritual of the Omophagic sacrifice, an equally outstanding primitive cult.

Upon a rock; . . . and then I heard in dream  
Voices in colloquy:

Vide supra,  
ll. 6-7

*First Voice*

'Hail, Mother Earth!'—

*Second Voice*

'Earth! shall the nakedness of Mother Earth  
be covered?'—

Contrast *Ancient  
Ideal*, ll. 98-105  
(Mother Earth)

*Third Voice*

'Drugged she lies, with piteous look  
Appealing mute to the hollow Eye of Heaven  
From her old bed of rocks and cold salt ooze!'—

*First Voice*

'A death-like pallor shoots through limbs half-veiled  
With the pellucid raiment woven of wave  
and wind!'—

*Second Voice*

'Our Virgin Mother lies discrowned!'—

350

*First Voice*

'But fecund yet is her maternity,  
Her morning gleam not vanished utterly,  
A liquid music bubbles in her springs,  
And burns at core her heart's green chrysolite!'

Thus dreamt I nightly of Man's destiny.

In wintry nights o'er-arched with a deeper dome,  
'Neath the slow-moving congregated pomp  
Of stars which are of other birth, I dreamt



Of Man and Earth orphaned in desert space,  
 And ever in my dreams I heard a cry, 360  
 That rang from Earth to Heaven, from Heaven to Earth:  
 'Come, O Prometheus, come out of the Night  
 Of Ages, from the Deep, the dark, dark Deep!  
 Herald of Psyche's reign etern, O come!  
 Balk thou of their old envious purposes  
 Foul Fate's dark counsellors, and breathe  
 Thy subtle-influencing beauteous fire  
 Through my old withered veins and half-dead limbs,  
 Here as I lie on my cold bed of rocks,—  
 So, like the Spring, thy breath may mould and work 370  
 In sleep of winds and grass, in winged life  
 And dreamful sentience, in the toil of Thought;  
 And brooding everywhere with one young sway,  
 Respectful of the course of love and being  
 In every little atom, counter-sway  
 All fateful influence, each witching star,  
 Each withering charm and incantation dread  
 With which they bound the good God's nerveless hand,  
 Those old magicians at the birth of Time,  
 Prime Nature's alien masters, grinding things 380  
 And thoughts, o'er-wielding these to purposes  
 Of theirs, as if there were nor loves nor linkings,  
 Affinities disrespectful of their sway,  
 Nor individual ways could ever be  
 In creature's clay or barren breast of Earth!'

Vide supra,  
ll. 341-2

Vide supra, l. 338 So to my ear attuned would ring that cry,  
Vibrant, in winter, dreaming of the spring;



A cosmic voice, but still in dream it muffled  
Beats of a magic drumming in all space!

*Transition*

Beautiful dreams of renovated Man 390

I dreamt undaunted still; I'd overcome,  
As with forgotten notes of a lost, lost lyre,  
The Powers of Darkness and Unreason old  
Throned in the Deep of the Universal Heart.

These I'd unmake by power of breath and touch;  
Not breath demoniac that unloosens blind  
Furies who hurl in avalanches down  
Horrid Destructions, Crashings, Ruinings;  
Nor touch of brimstone fire, mad Anarch's torch  
That kindles blood-red glares of the dark Prime; 400  
But the Spirit's silent breath and breathing grace  
That the big brute ensouls, Earth's Caliban,  
Or Champak-fingered Beauty's touch that wakes  
The world-soul out of trance supine, and stills  
With Peace the Passion of Humanity!

*The Struggle Within*

A change came o'er the spirit of my dream . . .  
In panorama spread the world before me . . .  
The Spring had gone; no more in silver fog  
Played rainbow colours; mythic Visitants  
Vanished; dark phantasies eclipsed my Hope; 410  
Nor nightly dreams,—the day too had its cycle:  
Dawn's ashes smouldered, evening's copper flamed  
Till Earth's blue corpse turned livid; but the noon!  
Meseemed in noontide glare I overhung

A fiery gulf, a blazing mystery,  
Saw the great Tribulation which is Being,  
Rapt in dread flames, and whirled in ceaseless roud!

A change came o'er the spirit of the dream: . . .  
I saw the fires die down, without, within.

The Earth's tints faded into iron grey,  
And slow a settled gloom case-hardened me;  
And e'er to me the wide world's visage wore  
An iron mask enstamped with scowling hate,  
An opposition, contrariness sharp,  
Mocking with outer law all inner norm!

420

In that half scowl, half leer, was interfused  
With a dark drift, a sense of tragic fate,  
But not the sense of sense, Hate's self-awareness  
With answering possibility of love!

Contrast *Ancient  
Ideal*, ll. 296-303

(The Great Illu-  
sion knows nor  
love nor hate)

Automaton! or an intelligence  
In embryo, yet unevolved,—just reached  
The dark sub-conscious layer, grim, perversé!

430

Soliloquized I then in anguished tones!

'O 'tis an alienated Master's work!

Vide supra,  
ll. 378-9

O for the good God with the hands unnerved!  
In the beginning, He rough-hewed the world;  
Was it His mind then failed; or purpose swerved?  
Then did all creatures fail in Him, their Maker!

The curse on generations yet unborn  
Maturing bound Him?—He, the Sacrifice,  
The first, exposed on an island Universe?

440

'With that first fall the world is gone awry,  
A Master's harp with jangled, tangled strings,



The *Vox Humana* cracked, and in its place,  
 A discord harsh and dissonant, a clank  
 And clangour as of iron chains, which robs  
 Life of its inner store of lyric tunes:  
 Youth of his innocence, Joy of her calm,  
 Hope of her Immortality, and Love  
 Of his illusion of infinity!  
 O world with wrecks bestrewn! O lightless Light!

450

At last I woke into a reverie,  
 And as the darkness murkier grew, I mused:  
 'Is this the darkest hour before the dawn?  
 For the world's wreckage proves the soul in me  
 Atomic, rigid, indestructible.  
 He, the Great God, has wrecked His handiwork  
 And Himself; even so I, maimed soul, am King!

'Disfranchised, man yet holds inalienable  
 His sovran claim to the allegiance of things!  
 This soul-king absolute an eastern people  
 Abject, denuded, dispossessed beneath  
 The glacier-clad Himalayas, once taught me,  
 Where in an eternal war of annihilation  
 The Ātman dissipates the world to nothing!

460

'The world without storms in; the world within  
 Storms out; 'twixt upper and nether stone  
 The soul is ground; even so One is free,  
 Whose truth unmask the world's false guises bare,  
 The just man militant! He is the Way,  
 A new Prometheus, universal man!

470



Vide supra, ll.  
275-8; ll. 529-  
30; also cf. infra,  
l. 978

Himself he frees from the revolving Wheel  
Of Law, the blind Necessity that binds  
Tyrant and victim to one doom. Outlaw,  
An inner peace beyond the Fates he seeks,  
In soul-war 'gainst an iron Universe.'

*The Seque!*

Vide *Medieval  
Ideal*, ll. 148-53  
(War against the  
World-order)

Vide supra, ll.  
237-41; ll. 280-1

O blest nativity of Sons of Earth,  
Sublime, heroic destiny of war  
(In the sheer depth of their own helplessness  
Entrenched) against Fate's evil Gorgon brood, 480  
The leagued Powers of brute Matter and blind Sense,  
Sworn to abase transcendent God in Man:  
A war best managed with no fury, none,  
For Jove is paramour of Furies foul,  
Sole Master of the Engines, and can hurl  
'Gainst us his hateful killing forces old,  
Blind Sense, stark Violence and drunken Lust!  
Nor Dian chaste-zoned, nor the Maid Divine  
Astraea, righteous sole in Heaven of Thrones  
And Powers, can rule these Satyræ who in pride 490  
Have looked upon their nakedness and smiled!  
Naked are Law and Justice stript of Force!  
But *One* there is of other birth, unseen  
Of mortal eyes, unpurged of misty fires:  
Alone, has the prophetic Prometheus hailed her  
Deliverer of Earth and Heaven, of Man and God!  
For thine shall be the altar of this Earth,  
This temple void, Immensity, be thine,  
O Psyche Etern, Vision of deathless Love!

\*

\*

\*

Oft in Eve's hour of reverie, I'd sit,  
 Like to a lover on Lethean shores,  
 On some lorn ledge, some promontory high,  
 Till the Earth loomed vast into a floating shadow  
 'Midst the sky-shadows of this templeless  
 Temple, with altar altarless, inscribed  
 To the Great Naught;—in this the world's eclipse,  
 There is no fellow partnership, no, none;  
 An incommunicable sleep alone

500

Here is; else, all dark Void! But oft  
 Out of this reverieless reverie  
 (Entombed so vacantly, so utterly,  
 Under sky-cenotaph), this nameless gulf  
 Of shadowinesses, essences conjectural,  
 Inanity of outer, inner, being,—  
 Out of this reverieless reverie

510

When sunset-tide opens yon Space profound,  
 Fold within fold, as open can a rose,  
 Out of the Hollow of the sinking Sun,  
 Riseth rich, beautiful, one Dream unrolled  
 Endlessly around, a Venus-dream amidst  
 Heaven's strange transfiguration, and Neptune's seas  
 Open transparently to their hidden depths!

*Cf. Medieval  
 Ideal, ll. 16-27;  
 Ancient Ideal,  
 ll. 246-55*

O like this Venus-dream out of the Void,  
 O come, Prometheus, come out of the shadow  
 Of Ages, out of the Deep, the dark, dark Deep!  
 Arise and lead from Darkness to the Light!  
 Arise and lead from Death to Deathlessness!  
 Arise and lead from Untruth's snares to Truth:  
 Knowledge divine with Freedom that annuls,

520

Vide infra, l. 978

*Cf. Medieval  
 Ideal, ll. 98-103;  
 ll. 220-4  
 (The Leader)*



The Law of Matter, blind Necessity!  
 Arise and lead Humanity, Earth's God,  
 To Psyche Etern, Vision of deathless Love!

530

Vide *Ancient Ideal*, ll. 198-201;  
*Modern Ideal*, ll. 965-8  
 (Mystic aural experiences of different types)  
 Cf. l. 971

Cf. *Medieval Ideal*, l. 112;  
 ll. 183-98 (The Curse Motif)

Vide *infra*, l. 655;  
 l. 661. Contrast  
*Ancient Ideal*, l. 296

Cf. *Medieval Ideal*, ll. 195-8

From out the inane, like beacon-flash, a Voice  
 Answered symbolic, weird, oracular:  
 'Not by negation is the world annulled  
 Or Law of Matter, blind Necessity!  
 Psyche, the purified, demands the rite,  
 Purification in Life's central fire!

Vicarious falls on man *her* curse, *her* lot,  
 The old, old search in Earth and Heaven and Hell, 540  
 While Peace, the Phantom, ever flees before!  
 For dark is the spirit's inner eye unpurged,  
 Unfit for Visions, Glories, Dreams etern!  
 The Great Illusion holds man's soul in thrall,  
 Green is the Earth, and sweet the Siren's call!

Then like the surf breaking on an angry shore:  
 'But Man's green life must burn away in fires  
 Vulcanian, ere to the illimitable

His searching spirit come; this is the upward way;  
 From nether fire to ether; so Jove's eagle 550  
 Alone that in the burntng roar sulphureous  
 Shakes, and screams out, and wheels round in delight  
 Can soar to the empyreal element!

At this, to swish of beating wings, I woke  
 On the bald crag where I had slept and dreamt:  
 An old man pointed to a cave-lit fire;  
 Below, the shades of Night crept up the hills. 557



THE MODERN IDEAL

69

THE FINALE

*The Passing of Psyche*

*The Passion*

*The Quest turned inwards*

*Fire in the cave!* . . .

The Great Enlightenment within! But how?  
The Nightmare flees the day; not so annulled  
Is the dark Power of Nature's drift in man,  
By dawning knowledge, though 'twere absolute,  
Or simple creed of Love and Innocence,  
Or yet the Power of truth centred in a Will  
Good, holy, ineffable, nor dreams avail  
Of kingdom come, the Sovereign State of Man,  
Of Social Justice or Communal Good,  
To emancipate the individual Self,  
In whom must yet the free collective life  
Be realized, or not at all! How must  
The Great Deliverance within be found?

Contrast *Medieval Ideal*,  
560 ll. 122-5.

570

'*But Man's green life must burn away!*' Must then  
The spirit burn, like chaff this fresh green life,  
This sap and these carnation tints that clothe  
With veined flesh this bald anatomy?

Vide supra,  
l. 547

And what is Spirit but the breath of Life?  
'Tis Passion-incense that the Spirit breathes,  
But Passion flowers on earthy stalk take root  
In blood-soaked soil enchaineling the brute!  
And what is life but rhythm of Heart and Brain?

580

A Picture framed with the star-veined dome!  
How can this life break its own image fair,

6

How spirit crucify its double, flesh!  
 This is thy Passion, O Humanity!  
 That this brute Image, thy sworn enemy,  
 Is body of thy body, sense of sense,  
 Soul of thy soul, locked in a deadly embrace!  
 Brutel! What's this brute but man's own emblem, Man  
 In the making, yea, man's-maker, origin,  
 Whom he must crucify! O riddle dark 590  
 As fate, as pitiless, implacable!

\* \* \*

Strife! strife! the primal anarchy, within!  
 War internecine, bitterer than Death!  
 Member 'gainst member, impious blood-feud, brand  
 Of Cain upon man's brow!

Contrast *Medieval*  
*Ideal*, ll. 171-3

With waters from the Fount of Peace, who'd quench  
 This hungry Flame that like a living eye  
 Burns in the socket of Desire, quench the mad rage  
 Against the mute soul of the Universe,  
 The fever in the blood, the unnatural thirst 600  
 For poison, driven to maniac fury still,  
 The ghoulish appetite that comes of feeding rank,  
 Or queasy surfeit following feast of soul!  
 Who'd quench the cold fires! glitter of the ice  
 In lidless stare of stone-eyed Vacancy,  
 Laodicean smile on lips of Faith and Zeal,  
 The rotten shine of soaked Enthusiasm,  
 The flicker of pale Disillusionment,  
 The twilight inauspicious, Doubt's Eclipse,  
 While from her grey Heaven pitiless smiles could 610



Reason, as the eagle from her sunlit eyrie eyes  
 Ravenous small vermin gyre and souse and check,  
 Deep in the shadowy valley shrilling faint!  
 O Peace! O Pool oblivious! O the Void!

\* \* \*

A darkness fell upon my soul in doubt;  
 Fleeing I passed like Night from land to land,  
 And ever Peace, a Vision, fled before!  
 My life's one star had set, Promethean Hope  
 Of man's deliverance. . . .

What if this Psyche, Bride of deathless Love,  
 This Vision, be but phantom conjured false  
 By chained Humanity on Fate's dark rock?  
 Was she the Siren? Psyche-Siren, one in twain?

\* \* \*

A strange weird malady upon me fell;  
 For alienated from my proper self,  
 I seemed to grow into the world; within me  
 Repassed the Ages, ghostly mockery!  
 My brain was as the world-soul's; *in dark trance*  
*Seized, darkly rolled through this brain gigantesque,*  
*In moving pomp, Dan Cupid's carnival:*

Spouting Grotesques and monstrous Caryatids,  
 With puckered faces, Mothers of the prime,  
 Ogled in Amazonian coquetry;  
 The Hottentot Venus at the Milo smiled!  
 Masked Queens of Courts of Love would dance a jig  
 With Brides of Heaven, disfigured for a charm  
 Against the flesh; the temple slaves of gods<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Devadāsīs (slaves of the gods), dancing girls in South Indian temples.

620

630

The Wanderer  
 Motif  
 The World-trance  
 Cf. infra, ll. 667-  
 71; ll. 700-4;  
 ll. 722-6  
 Contrast *Ancient*  
*Ideal*, ll. 265-78  
 (Bacchantes)  
*Medieval Ideal*,  
 ll. 195-8;  
 ll. 311-2

Tript with slaves of the harem; odalisques;  
 Visions of Naiads with flowing breasts  
 Cut capers with New Women, breastless Avatars . 640.  
 Of Love unsexed! Last came and last did go  
 Libido in triumphal car with captive trains,  
 Masked pageantry!—Erotic fancies all,  
 Phantoms of the World's Desire, the Masque of Love  
 In my tranced brain, which was the world's not mine!  
 And slow this trance into a dream resolved  
 Of one majestic shape in splendour veiled,  
 The Mistress of this planetary world:  
 She in her hand a crystal globe revolved,  
 That burnt now white, now red, a variable star, 650.  
 Venus and Martius blended in one glow,  
 But more of Saturn's dusky semblance showed  
 With rotatory baldricks, altering rings,  
 Bands of vari-coloured lights and shades,  
 The Great Illusion in all creatures' eyes!  
 Before her Throne in endless file they pass,  
 The generations since the birth of Time!  
 Nations and Empires, multitudes more vast  
 Than in the Babylonish plains erst famed!  
 Prostrate, with one acclaim they hail Life's Queen 660  
 Her shadow in the crystal globe's Illusion!  
 Psyche some call her, others wiselier cry,  
 The Siren, Māyā, Dolour, Will-to-live!  
 Some hapless votary who looks beyond  
 She smiles to lift her veil upon, and strikes  
 Blind with Saturnian darkness, blind and mad!

Vid. infra,  
 ll. 947-60  
 (Psyche-Urania)  
 Contrast with the  
 Siren here  
 depicted

Cf. *Medieval  
 Ideal*, ll. 20-27  
 (The Queen of  
 Destiny)

\* \* \*



*The world-trance seized again, the Ages passed, I looked  
Beyond her shadow in the crystal globe!  
A darkness fell upon my soul, Lucretian;  
Fleeing I passed like Night from land to land  
And ever Peace, a Vision, fled before me!*

670

Recapitulation of  
the Pagan and the  
Medieval in  
Modern  
Humanism

A rugged coast-line, Ætna fumèd afar, . . .  
An angry Sun was setting on the waves;  
In a labouring hulk, an old man wizened lay,  
Facing the Sun with haggard eye and jaw  
Hard-set, from which I wiped the bloody foam,  
And gently whispered Peace in dying ears.  
Hoarsely he snarled: "Peace to the halt and maimed,  
Prate peace and goodwill to the slave who dreads  
Hobgoblin; as for me, the pagan death,  
A sea bird's lone, last flight to Deeps unknown,  
The dissolution greetingless, on trackless path,  
Of beast and savage, our Progenitors."

680

(1) The Pagan

Cf. *Medieval  
Ideal*, ll. 199-207

Contrast *Medie-  
val Ideal*, l. 217;

l. 326  
Cf. *Ancient Ideal*,  
l. 315

'The cult of Peace, the cult of Death', he jeered,  
As at the eternal enemy of man's  
Free instincts, heritage of Man the child  
Of the broad-bosomed, plenteous-breasted Earth,  
Man, ancient playmate of the Naiads  
(He pointed to a vase's dancing group)

Cf. *Medieval  
Ideal*, ll. 199-  
207

Cf. *Ancient Ideal*,  
ll. 47-9

Whom some cold-blooded Saint Hermaphrodite  
Transformed to beldams, breastless, sapless, dry!  
Peace had arraigned his life's sweet purposes,  
And turned to dust the roses he had planted  
And fed with heart's blood. Would he could outblot

690

Contrast this  
earlier and purer  
paganism with the  
later syncretism  
depicted in the  
*Ancient Ideal*

Those great calm orbs that shone into his soul  
But muttering, 'Me thou baulk'st, O Galilean;  
I die weak, vile, unblest, by Power I've served.'  
His heart strings snapped, and even as dead he fell  
Psyche eternal passed upon that face!

\* \* \*

(2) Recapitulation  
of the Medieval

*The world-trance seized, the Ages passed, I looked, . . . 700*  
*Beyond her shadow in the globe's Illusion!*  
*A darkness fell upon my soul, like Dante's;*  
*Fleeing I passed like Night from land to land,*  
*And ever Peace, a Vision, fled before me!*

The convent on the hill-top I'd just gained;  
Afar, the eternal snows kindled to rose . . .  
A glory from the orient Sun empurpled  
The chapel's blazoned oriel, imaging  
Christ Jesus feasting with an angel choir  
After the forty days in the wilderness. 710

Contrast this  
Orthodox  
Catholic Medievalism  
with  
the Heterodox  
Medievalism  
depicted in the  
Rime of the  
Wizard Knight

A nun in blackweeds on her deathbed prayed;  
And as a crucifix the mumbling priest  
Held high, she, bride of Heaven, from the figured Death  
Turning, upgazed at the bright festal scene.  
Her eyes closed in the thickening mist; her lips  
A-thirsting sucked the empty air, she sighed,  
And straining wildly to her ribbed breast  
As at the nimbus-circled Head of Christ a-feasting,  
Bathed in cold sweats and thrills of flesh, she fell  
Dead in ecstatic ravishment; and lo! 720  
Psyche eternal passed upon that face!

\* \* \*



*The world-trance seized, the Ages passed, I looked. . . .  
 She smiled to lift her veil, and made a sign!  
 A darkness fell upon my soul, like Rousseau's;  
 Fleeing I passed like Night from land to land  
 And ever Peace, a Vision, fled before me!*

(3) The sign of  
the Modern

'Twas Tokyo after the great exodus,  
 That night the wind shrilled loud in emptied slums,  
 In a dark hut on a mattress lay and moaned  
 A woman's bloated face whereon the plague  
 Had set its livid mask. The light burned low.

730

Some tattered finery of a stage queen  
 She had on for a cover, some remains,  
 Tarnished no less, of a gay garish beauty.

'Parisienne?'—she nodded, and I stared,  
 Blankly at the blank hungry walls, until  
 Ministering, I caught her accents faint:

' . . . a daughter of the demi-monde. . . .  
 Tutor to me in mother's house was one,  
 Master of a mystic rhythm, the Dance of Love,

740

. . . An atheist,  
 Artist-experimenter in old cults,  
 (An eastern Manichee he called himself)

His God was Love, unbodied and unsexed,  
 Beatific, transcendent, mystic, holy!

Whose priest and acolyte he was, and taught  
 My budding innocence the mysteries  
 Of a true Inamorata, but still shunned

As blandishment my simple wiles'  
 Incarnate maidenhead! A Manichee,

750

He loved to trace the Satyr's goat-hoof mark  
 In virgin brow. And when the mark appeared,  
 As leprous taint he pitied, shunned, abhorred,  
 Being priest and acolyte of sexless Love!

'Bemocked, denuded, and disfranchised bare,  
 I turned my flesh to uses of the brute,  
 Being sworn of Venus' sisterhood to lure  
 (Dancing the Sign of Love, the Master's token),  
 The callow novices who loud acclaimed  
 Mine atheist as Saint and Patriarch!

760

'Gainst God in Heaven I raved, for He  
 Was powerless to besmirch His enemy,  
 The atheist, to trip him by the heels,  
 To hunt the big game down by skilful aim,  
 Smiting the soul with a sweet and secret lust!

'And thus it was the holy Manichee  
 Blanched and bleached paler than his sainted poll,  
 And I, a veteran Venus on the stage,  
 Would paint and rouge, a stale and wrinkled flower!

'The gulf of years oblivious rolled between; 770  
 My Dance of Love had made the world's grand tour  
 In star-like progress with the world's acclaim;  
 Until one fairy night gay with the Feast  
 Of Lamps, far in chrysantheme land, late bands  
 Of revellers, to ditties amorous  
 And peals of laughter, reeled and danced away;  
 Triumphant from a balcony I smiled!



A white-poll'd gay Lothario in weeds  
 With a thin jest and venerable leer  
 Threw me a kiss, an ogle, then a sign. . . .  
 At dawn we parted; as he left, he danced,  
 The Sign of Love! 'Twas he, mine ancient Love!  
 Saint-Atheist, the holy Manichee;  
 And in that moment's livid flash I knew  
 I was fallen; for long the God of Faith  
 Had died in me, but yet the twin Great God  
 Of Un-faith, throned on polar pinnacle  
 Of cold white Truth and barren Chastity,  
 The planet ruled; He, my sworn Enemy;  
 Had lived in me, and made me count well-lost  
 My maidenhood as foil to His sole power!  
 But in that moment's livid sulphur-light  
 My world grew pale and grey and desolate;  
 And madly flaying I undid my face,  
 Yet stamped with the kiss of a great betrayal!  
 At this she turned to me that bloated mass,  
 And lo! Psyche eternal passed upon *that face!*

780

790

Contrast the two forms of Modernism, the Individualistic Passion of Life in this story and the Universalistic Passion in the sequel, ll. 805-14

\* \* \* \* \*  
 Thus fleeing still like Night from land to land,  
 In darkest hour despondent, 'midst bleak scenes  
 Of Wreck and Desolation, silent came  
 A strength of Hope born of the need of hope  
 To buoy up souls in pain dragged down to the abyss;  
 A sense of Love's vicarious Power to bear,  
 An attitude of cosmic acquiescence:  
 My brain was as the world's brain sensitive,  
 My life, the world-life inexpugnable!

800

Contrast *Medieval Ideal*, ll. 162-80 (The Knight of the Human, Redemptive Passion)

My lamp was garnished so it might still feed  
 The dying lamp in each house of the death-watch;  
 My emptiness was filled, to pour unceasing  
 Into empty vessels; perishing, in arid waste, 810  
 Of thirst of life, I found the stream of life  
 And Life's tradition immemorial,  
 With those who toss and buffet with its waves,  
 The generations of the castaways!  
 In bitter waters of this nether Styx  
 I dipt, and so invulnerable grew.  
 The Passion of Humanity, re-lived,  
 My vision purged of misty fires, or hot,  
 Or cold;—by slow unconscious steps, I moved 820  
 To the central cosmic light, in which I'd see  
 Transfigured, in the heart of things, my story:  
 The individual passion of my life  
 As World-Passion of Creative Deity!

Cf. *infra*,  
ll. 913-5

Cf. *Ancient Ideal*,  
ll. 250-64

\* \* \*

One summer eve's descent 'mong isles of palms,  
 Fanatic fascinations, lotos-dreams,  
 Kindling sweet odours felt within the sense,  
 Rose to my brain as fumes of incense burnt;  
 Old consecrated memory, with a Face,  
 A spectral image on the darkness' edge,  
 Did haunt my soul, as haunts some ruined shrine 830  
 A columned glory from a sinking sun;  
 An alternating rhythmic beat and throb  
 Serpent-like writhed, pulsing in inmost leaps;  
 A tune in the soul would spring and faint and ebb,



A ghost of a hushed voice, a lost, lost love's,  
 'Follow, O follow, follow, follow O';  
 To which strange phantasms floated through the brain:

In vision, spell-bound as a ghost, meseemed  
 The purple mountain crests across me moved  
 In a dim vista; through their openings,  
 In a half-dream, I saw the white gulls wheel,  
 And flit about the sinking orb, grey specks  
 Against a flame of violet seas. . . .

A rugged beach. . . .

I saw, as in a flash, it was the same  
 Where, with the tawny sands and pebbles bright  
 Her infant soul had played the architect,  
 (The building passion hers, to tame the wild!)  
 Watching Heaven's dome and fiery pyramids  
 To snatch a sombre grace, or the wilderness  
 Of bold volcanoes, cindered, glossy-hued,  
 Topt with the dazzling glory of the Sun!  
 There stretched the dunes lonesome and bald, the shore  
 Where dolphin-like her beating heart would clasp  
 The swelling bosom of blue-flashing Sea,  
 Sporting with children of the Sun and Winds,  
 Salt spray and the wreathed white foam; whence her face,  
 Changeably eye-lit ever and anon.

As the fleck-sparkling Image of the Sea,  
 Drank its quick impulses, its fitful beams,  
 Its motions leaf-like, light and tremulous!  
 There, into couch convolved or bright-lipped shells,  
 Fluting lips brighter, archer, parted faint  
 In a half smile, the laugh-eyed maid had breathed

Contrast  
 Medieval Ideal,  
 ll. 42-51

840

850

860

Her wild sea-music to the wild waves' roar,  
 Blasts such as shook the coral caves, until  
 (One last hoarse storm-lit night upon the reef)  
 This daughter of the ocean brother waves  
 Took to the abysmal deeps! . . .

So were they ruined,  
 My dreams of an innocent Pacific home,  
 Lapt light by liquid-lisping sibilant seas,  
 On its blest eve! Or so it was believed;  
 - Until later I learnt how she had joined  
 (Driven by passionate hunger for wild life,  
 The stir of some ancestral taint in blood?)  
 In neighbouring isles, beneath the Southern Cross,  
 A tribe all-wild, and hailed as Queen Heaven-sent,  
 After a brief bright space of daring deeds  
 In planting happy homes in virgin Isles  
 As of the Blest, she, Mother of the tribe,  
 Was offered up, at fire omophagous,  
 (By secret instigation of the former Chief),  
 As sacrosanct unto the tribal god!

870

880

So were they ruined, my dreams of a Pacific home,  
 Burnt at the stake, consumed to ashes sere!

A shuddering world heard breathless and aghast;  
 Punitive expeditions, following fast,  
 Razed the tribes out, and, with them, all record,  
 All human handiwork and monument,  
 Of the blest memory this man-hunt wreaked  
 Dire vengeance for, and sowed the dragon's teeth! 890

Cf. supra,  
 ll. 404-5 (the  
 First Sacrifice);  
 ll. 295-7  
 (Symbolic use)

Vide supra,  
 ll. 355-6



On bleak shores bleach wild bones—to cosmic dust  
 For future worlds! Repaid was thus Life's debt,  
 Of Life, Great Mother, fecund, e'er renewed!

Vide supra, l. 111

This, in quick flash, repassed in my tranced brain,  
 Old scenes! And as I stood by sounding seas  
 Beneath the Southern Cross, I saw a train  
 Unrolled in cosmic background, silent Shades  
 Rehearsing in dumb show Man's age-long story!

Compare the  
 three Pageants of  
 History rapidly  
 visualized in the  
 Epic Finale, (1)  
 the Pageant of  
 Man's Story,

Saw torrid Nature fanning to a blaze  
 Volcanic embers of Heredity!

900

l. 169-262;  
 (2) the Masque  
 of Love,  
 ll. 628-45;  
 (3) this dumb  
 show (origins of  
 Ethos)  
 ll. 895-906

Saw Magic Force seal Custom Primitive  
 With sevenfold seals of blood! saw Mother-right,  
 And Civilization's Ethos issuing thence,  
 Tearing the womb maternal—to be born!  
 The talons dripping still with blood that stains  
 The generative dust of future Man!

Even as these shadows one another chased  
 In the horizon, overhead the Heavens  
 Did burn, an angry glare, fierce, pitiless,  
 Crimsoning the Illimitable Inanel!

910

Was it that last fire's sacrificial glow?  
 Was it the streaming blood that washed it down?

Revealed in the light, in space's Void, I saw  
 The Eternal Passion in the Heart Divine,  
 The World-Passion of Creative Deity:

Cf. *Ancient Ideal*,  
 ll. 250-64  
 (One Eternal  
 Passion)

A Virgin Mother's Love vicarious, free,  
 And Hate, the child! that kills the saving Love

Vide *Ancient  
Ideal*, ll. 310-1

To kill itself! man's wretched story! swallowed up  
In Ocean's ageless laughter in the end!

Cf. *Ancient Ideal*,  
ll. 304-9

(Destiny of the  
spheres)

Cf. supra, ll. 282-4  
(Vortex Cosmical)

Is this the end, I called to sounding seas, 920  
Such tragic denouement directive still  
Of this slow-moving Spectacle of Heaven and Earth?

I stood tall, statuesque, in vision bound . . .  
Was it in dream I called? As odours still  
The air impregnated, a gust of sound  
Æ-o-lian, a moan far-off yet near,

Like the sphere music heard in the soul's trance,  
Lulled the loud welter of the Sea-and-Moon!

That Face, so changeful ever and anon

As the foam-sparkling Image of the Deep, 930

In a half-swoon outdawned on me that Face,

Image of halcyon Peace brooding o'er seas

That in a shoreless ocean break no more! . . .

\* \* \* \*

But hark! a cry from out the heart of things:

'I am the Sacrifice!

'Of utter unfulfilment

Comes My grace of fruition!

Of utter tribulation

Comes My hush of Peace!'

\* \* \*

'Behold

The mystery!

From ashes, from cinders,

940



The Phoenix<sup>1</sup> is born,—  
 From the Nirvāṇa<sup>2</sup> of Passion,  
 The ineffable Peace that blesseth,  
 The Peace after the storm!

\*

\*

\*

\*

\*

Even as I gazed, that face did slowly pass,  
 Resolved to one Majestic Shape, unveiled  
 In splendour boundless as the ether streams!  
 She ruled the starry dance; her broad open Eye  
 Had a sense of vast Spaces, Systems infinite,  
 Æonic days and Cycles of the Suns!  
 For in the hollow of her hand, meseemed  
 She hung up Space's Spiral Crystalline,  
 In which she contemplated, whirling round  
 In vortices, her myriad world-streams, stuff  
 Of cosmic dust, concentric whorl in whorl!  
 The breath of her countenance lights in the dust  
 A central fire, of Life that never fails,  
 But kindles, lightens, glows from world to world!

950 Trance experiences: Visual  
 apparitions,  
 followed, as the  
 coma deepens, by  
 auditory ones

960

\*

\*

\*

\*

\*

Strains of Creation's choral song anon  
 Came bursting, with the uproarious roll of Æons!

\*

\*

\*

<sup>1</sup> As instances of the 'Symbol' or the 'Mythus' the Phoenix and Prometheus stand for aspects of ultimate truth.

<sup>2</sup> Lit. 'blowing out', extinguishment, as of fire. A 'great world' of the Buddhist religion and philosophy.

Even as I gazed, a darkness fell; my soul  
 Swooned in the dream, a swoon within a swoon!  
 And then in me there flashed a something darkling,  
 A soul within the soul,—a psychic twain?  
 And from the outer darkness's edge, a Voice  
 Beating in tune to the rhythm in the soul,  
 In murmurous tidal palpitation rose,  
 The Voice was mine, and yet not mine, but cosmic! 970  
 Chanting the law of man's deliverance,  
 Wisdom to master Death, the Power of Life!

Cf. *Ancient Ideal*,  
 ll. 158-9

\* \* \*

Cf. *Ancient Ideal*,  
 l. 20

Strains of Creation's choral song anon  
 Burst forth, with the uproarious roll of Æons!

\* \* \*

'O Human, O Human!

Unbind thyself,

And rise!

Learn:

Psyche's curse is annulled,

And Prometheus' has *unbound himself!* 980

\* \* \*

'Behold

The mystery!

Ever and anon,

Within, without,

<sup>1</sup> 'Prometheus has unbound himself'—here rings out the note of a true  
 Modernity not sounded in ancient hymn or medieval ballad.

The new concept of Prometheus Unbound, here adumbrated, turns on the  
 reconciliation of the Pagan and the Christian Mythos in a new world-order,  
 that of Cosmic Humanism.

Vide supra, ll.  
 524-5; ll. 471-4



One meets Death<sup>1</sup> and confesses Life,  
 Wise and free,  
 Self dead, self risen as World-soul!

\*

\*

\*

\*

\*

\*

'Twas break of dawn; I woke upon the reef  
 Where I had dreamt; the tide was slowly rising,

Cf. supra, l. 866.

## EPILOGUE

A cosmic Voice! the soul's ventriloquy?  
 Or cosmic image printed on the now  
 And here,—no voucher for an all-Beyond!

990 Cf. supra, l. 968

<sup>1</sup> The Great War, to take a glaring instance. May the sequel tally!

## APPENDIX

### *The Parallelisms in the Three Ideals—Common Motifs*

These parallelisms and contrasts, it will be observed, centre round certain elemental concepts and motifs entering into the three ideal constructions. Chief among such motifs are:

1. *The Vision of the Ideal, embodied in some concrete cosmic symbol*

In the Ancient Hymn, this is the Vision of Urania in the Milky Way (ll. 63-72), or the Siren of the Ancient Skies (ll. 304-9); in the Medieval Ballad this is *Natura*, the 'half-veiled Bride' (ll. 282-7); in the Modern Quest, it is the Vision of Psyche-Urania in the Heavens, ruling the starry dance (ll. 947-60).

2. *The Birth of the Godhead*

This is conceived as a natural (or immanent) cosmic process in *The Ancient Ideal* (ll. 15-23); as a supernatural (or transcendent) phenomenon in *The Medieval Ideal* (ll. 83-9); as an emergent evolution in *The Modern Ideal* (ll. 182-90).

3. *The Passion of the World-drama*

In the Ancient Hymn, all Passions are but modes of the One Eternal Passion in the divine Mysteries



(ll. 250-64) which, however, 'knows nor love nor hate', but is only 'a rolling, rolling mystic dream'; in the Medieval Ballad, the world-life is blind, 'an endless track unkent', on which ride phantoms cold and hollow (ll. 100-6), but the World-Passion can be transcended by the Seer, who, 'poised on Peace's pinions' hears 'the music of the Spheres' (ll. 321-6); in the Modern Quest, the Passion of Life is transfigured as 'World-Passion of Creative Deity' (ll. 817-23).

#### 4. *The Great Illusion*

In *The Ancient Ideal*, the Godhead is also the Siren of the Ancient Skies (ll. 293-5, ll. 304-6), and all is illusory sport; in *The Medieval Ideal*, there is a background of silent mockery; the Queen of Destiny as La Belle Dame Sans Merci draws on the Knight (ll. 42-51) who throws himself into the glen, a tragic fate by which he at once fulfils and transcends the Curse originally laid on him; in *The Modern Ideal*, there is a dual reign, and the Siren (variously named Māyā, Dolour, Will-to-live) is set over against Psyche as the latter's double and counterfeit (ll. 649-65).

#### 5. *The Dance of Love*

In the Ancient Hymn, this is the cosmic dance of Māyā, figured as the dance of Gopis and Vallabhis (ll. 265-88); in the Modern Quest, it is seen in phantasy as the Masque of Love, or Dan Cupid's carnival (ll. 628-45). The Medieval Ballad merely alludes *en passant* to the 'Forms so fair' that 'vanish as air' and 'flee the Knight's embrace' (ll. 195-6).

## 6. *The Wanderer or Super-tramp*

In the Ancient Hymn, the world-wandering of the ancient Priest is kept in the background; in the Medieval Ballad, the Wizard Knight recounts his wanderings 'in desert Media, Mizraim, Rum' (ll. 130-43); in the Modern Quest, the hero is a homeless wanderer who 'flees like night from land to land' (l. 670; l. 703; l. 725).

## 7. *The Curse*

The *Ancient Ideal* at its setting, as in the Hymn, is free from this motif, for the Great Illusion is 'as the desert Sphinx impassive', and 'knows nor love nor hate' (ll. 293-302); in *The Medieval Ideal*, the curse on the Wizard Knight (a curse pronounced on 'him who would see Truth bare') is part of the central theme, the meaning of the curse being brought out in the story (ll. 183-98); in *The Modern Ideal*, the curse is Psyche's lot, fallen vicariously on every soul, 'the old' old search in Heaven and Earth and Hell' (ll. 539-41), an old curse with a new meaning as depicted in the Passion. In the Medieval form of the curse, the world is negated ('the Forms so fair all, turned to Naught,' l. 310) for the seer of the naked truth; in the Modern form, the world is transcended, through *Weltschmerz* ('The Passion of Humanity relieved', 'Self dead, self risen as World-soul' (l. 985), and not by 'soul-war' against an iron Universe' (l. 476); which is seen to be futile ('not by negation is the world annulled' l. 535).



8. *The Deliverance*

In *The Ancient Ideal*, the problem of deliverance does not consciously arise, though in the end the wailing of the human is heard above the Siren's song (l. 325-9); in *The Medieval Ideal*, the Wizard Knight, as the Knight of the Human, delivers souls 'nigh-lost and evil-croste', but cannot save himself ('O misery! from illusion free, this knowledge loses life' ll. 191-2); in *The Modern Ideal*, which has for its theme the conquest of Death through world-experience, it is the Passing of *Psyché* that delivers, when the individual's Passion of Life is transfigured as 'World-Passion of Creative Deity' (ll. 914-5), and Death is conquered by dying ('Self dead, self risen as World-soul' l. 985).

9. *Mother Earth*

In *The Ancient Ideal*, she is depicted as the Mighty Mother, 'Mother of gods and men' (ll. 98-105); in *The Medieval Ideal*, the Nymphs and Fays are her progeny; in *The Modern Ideal*, she is our 'Virgin Mother', 'lying discrowned' and 'appealing mute to the hollow eye of Heaven from her old bed of rocks and cold salt ooze' (ll. 346-7; l. 369).

10. *The Quest Eternal—the two Hunts, Ideal and Real*

The Ancient Hymn shows, in the Heavens, Ashtoreth, the Huntress Fair (ll. 31-2), or 'The Vision and the Chase in sight, renewed by night and day' (l. 71-2); the Medieval Ballad shows the ghostly crew of hunters riding in the haunted wood in a hapless quest in the night of

ages (ll. 65-89); in the Modern Quest, the hero is visited in dream and reverie by a legendary crew of Magian, Manichee and Mithraist (ll. 318-9). This is the quest of the Ideal, the Quest Eternal; but contrasted with this is another hunt of ages, that of Death the Hunter ('in these woods is Nimrod, mighty hunter before the Lord; the hunt resounds; Death chases Life, Life, Death' (ll. 247-58)). This is the Great Cycle of Life and Death, the Wheel of Law.

### CONCLUSION

#### *Cycles and Epicycles in History—The Movement of History—Evolution Viewed as a Spiral Ascent*

The three divisions, 'Ancient', 'Medieval' and 'Modern' are here adopted as convenient landmarks. But this does not imply that the movement of history stops with the last. These will be followed by other epochs which may be similarly arranged in triplets. A fivefold or sevenfold division, for instance, could be equally justified, and the movement of history might be arranged in a fivefold or sevenfold series. But these would be more difficult to manage. On the whole, a threefold series is most normal and most easily manageable to the human mind with its present range and limitations. A caveat is, however, necessary: the threefold division, here adopted, has nothing to do with the Hegelian triplix, 'thesis', 'antithesis', 'synthesis'; or with the Hindu triad, 'srishti', 'sthiti', 'laya'.

It will be seen that if the threefold division—'Ancient',



'Medieval' and 'Modern' — be adopted, it will have to be endlessly repeated; and accordingly, the terms 'Ancient', 'Medieval' and 'Modern' will lose their specific significance and mean no more than the first, the second, and the third member of any group or division.

This is, however, a merely formal question, and need not trouble us beforehand!